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"LONG JIM, THE SCOUT; Or, THE DEATH VALLEY OF THE APACHES," BEGINS IN OUR NEXT.

FRANK LESLIE'S

BOYS' AND GIRLS' WEEKLY.

An Illustrated Journal of Amusement, Adventure, and Instruction.

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Minnie's Rescue from the Wilds of Siberia; Or, The Daring Adventures of Two Boys.

By ROGER STARBUCK.

CHAPTER VI.

LOST.

HOURS passed before Brian and Will awoke. When at last they opened their eyes the sun was shining brightly, the sky was partly clear, and the violence of the gale had considerably abated.

They rose and looked around them.

No sign of the brig, but there was a mist far away to leeward, in which she might be hidden.

"There is no sail in sight," said Brian.

"No. What do you think we had better do now?"

Brian considered a moment.

"It will not do to remain here. With a powerful glass we could be seen a long distance."

"If some friendly American whaler would only heave in sight and pick us up we would be all right."

"No, no," said Brian, "not I. I have not yet given up the idea of rescuing my sister."

"True, but we will first have to get a vessel for the purpose of taking her off."

"Better take her off first and get the vessel afterward," said Brian.

"I like the idea," answered Will; "but how are we to do it? Okhotsk must be at least fifty miles from this point. We cannot get into the town, for we will be known at once."

"We may contrive some way to take Minnie off."

"I am with you, heart and soul," said Will. "But I am afraid we will fail, for all that."

"If you will go with me we can try, at any rate."

"Very well," answered Will.

Then he fell into a fit of musing.

The conviction that had almost forced itself upon his mind that Minnie loved the young Russian naval officer made him feel reluctant to find himself within reach of the influence of this Siberian beauty again.

Nevertheless, if it were possible to rescue her he would not hesitate.

Feeling much rested after their refreshing nap, the two boys started, keeping as near the coast as they could without being seen by any vessel out at sea.

To reach Okhotsk they would have to travel in this sort of way due north.

A few days would, they hoped, bring them within sight of the town. But they had not reckoned on the nature of the country they were about to traverse.

Ere they had proceeded ten miles they were nearly exhausted.

They had been obliged to scramble over high rocks, to descend into deep gullies, to plow through ground where the sand was up to their hips, and to occasionally cut their way through tangled vines and bushes.

"Hard work," said Brian, as the twain paused to rest near a pine-tree growing on the edge of a steep rise of land. "But I am resolved to get through."

"And I to help you," said Will.

"Ay, you are a friend worth having!" said Brian, grasping his hand. "I see you are not discouraged."

"I could never feel discouraged in doing anything for the good of Miss Lewis!" said Will, earnestly.

Brian looked at him gravely a moment.

"Pardon me," he said, "but you looked so gloomy, so mournful, when you spoke, that it seemed a little odd."

Then he added, quickly, "What is it that distresses you? Speak out, Will, and if I can help you, you can count on me to do it. What is there in the name of Miss Lewis to sadden you?"

Will turned aside his face a moment, then he said, "It is very evident that she cares nothing for Peter."

Brian laughed, but he soon checked himself.

"No," he said, "it is plain that she detests the fellow."

"But," said Will, hesitatingly, "there is another—a young Russian officer."

Brian stared.

"What the deuce do you mean?" he inquired, looking both puzzled and amused.

"That Captain Vosk!" burst forth Will, with a gulp, as if something stuck in his throat.

"Well, what of him?"

"Do you not think—has it not occurred to you that, perhaps, she loves him?"

Again Brian roared.

"A fine old place this to talk of love!" he said.

"No, no; but do you not think as I do?"

"Why, I have not thought anything about it. I did not notice anything, for my part. When a girl loves a man, I don't think she is overanxious to go away to some place where she will never be likely to see him again!"

"True; I did not think of that," said Will, brightening.

Brian now began to see into things.

He looked aside and commenced whistling softly to himself.

All at once he turned round and dealt his friend a gentle slap on the shoulder.

"Will, my dear boy, don't you go to falling in love with Minnie. She is a nice girl, of course, but there are many prettier than she."

"No, her equal is not

"HE RAN UP TO THE BEAR, AND WITH A POWERFUL THRUST DROVE THE KEEN STEEL THROUGH THE BODY OF THE BEAST, WHICH INSTANTLY FELL AWAY FROM THE PROSTRATE YOUTH ON ITS SIDE, EXPIRING."

upon the face of this earth?" cried Will. "I never saw any person to compare with her."

"Pooh! pooh! I, for my part, see nothing *particular* about her; she is very well, so far as she goes."

"She is an angel compared to all other women," broke forth Will.

Brian laughed, then he again laid his hand on Will's arm.

"I only said what I did to try you," he remarked. "Your love for my sister pleases me. I will make no objection to your union as soon as we get in a more civilized country."

Will grasped the speaker's hand and shook it with so much vigor that Brian made up a wry face.

"Don't crush my joints," he said. "If that is a proof of love, I hope I may never have any."

"But about that young Russian officer——" began Will, again looking grave.

"Confound all Russian officers!" said Brian. "If I thought Minnie could love a man who was one of the causes of her brother and his friend being put in our forlorn situation, I would give her the 'go by,' if I were you."

This was anything but consoling to Will. He would much rather have heard Brian "scout" the idea of Minnie's feeling any interest in Captain Vosk than to see him take it in so easy and careless a manner.

After half an hour's rest the boys continued their way.

"Dinner-time," said Brian, at last, "and we have nothing to eat."

"I am as hungry as a wolf," said Will, whose love-musings did not seem to have spoiled his appetite.

"We must shoot something. We may find something in the woods."

The two boys hurried toward the dark, dense pine-forest in the distance, hoping to there find game.

After a long tramp into the recesses of the forest, Will succeeded in shooting a couple of large ducks with his pistol.

These were soon picked, cleaned and roasted.

One duck was enough for a meal. The other one, wrapped in a mat of plaited grass prepared by Will, would serve for supper.

With the duck under his arm, Brian trudged on, accompanied by his friend.

"We don't seem to get into daylight," said Will, after they had walked a long time.

"No, we seem to be further in the woods than we were before."

"We have lost our way."

For hours the two boys vainly endeavored to get out of the shadows of the forest.

But when night came they were still in the woods.

"We may as well stay here now till morning," remarked Brian, as he sat down upon a pile of dry branches near one of the trees. "I own I am about used-up."

"We will eat our duck," said Will, "and then you can go to sleep."

"I? And you, too, of course."

"No, I will stand watch."

"Watch—for what?"

"Bears!" replied Will.

"Bears? Do you think they would molest us, even if they saw us?"

"Sometimes they do not, and sometimes they do. There are some big black fellows about here."

"Are there, really?"

"Yes. It is necessary to stand watch."

"Well, then, you go to sleep first, and I will stand the first watch."

"No—you first."

Then followed a friendly dispute, which ended in a resolve not to stand any watch at all.

Brian had pointed out a tree which would serve the purposes of a bed and a footstool combined.

It was a cedar which, about nine feet from the ground, was bent into a large knot with three or four broad branches stretching out on each side.

The boys could lie on this side by side.

With the usual recklessness of persons of their age, the thought never occurred to them that in their sleep they might possibly whisk about and have a tumble.

After supper they swung themselves into the tree and stretched themselves out, side by side, on the branches.

Brian's loosened sword-belt caught on a small branch near him, but he did not take trouble of casting it off.

He was so tired that he thought only of rest and sleep.

"I don't think a bear could reach us here," remarked Will, and ere the words were well out of his mouth he was snoring.

"I don't think so," responded Brian, carelessly, and he, too, began to snore.

Both boys were asleep and dreaming.

All at once Will was awakened by a peculiar noise.

It was a hoarse growl, like smothered thunder.

He rubbed his eyes, sat up and stared about him.

The moon was shining, and the soft light shone faintly down through openings among the trees.

A horrid-looking head and a pair of flaming, blood-shot eyes were the first objects that met the gaze of the youth.

His attention was next drawn to the situation of his friend, which was perilous in the extreme.

Brian, in his sleep, had partially slipped off the branch, and now lay with the lower part of his body upon it, while his head and arms rested upon a sort of network of branches nearly two feet below him.

This partial fall had probably waked him, but, with the strange indifference of persons when half asleep, he had resigned himself to his situation, and again drooped into a deep slumber.

The position of his head led to within seven feet of the ground, which was now occupied by a huge black bear.

The animal sat upon its haunches, and was making every effort to reach the tempting head of the sleeper.

It was a bear of large size, probably measuring six feet, with a shaggy skin, which was covered with dirt and pebbles.

Now and then, rising up to its utmost length, it would make a snap at the boy's head, which, however, was about three inches beyond its reach.

How long it had been there Will was unable to decide, but probably not long, or Brian would have been awakened by its growls.

Already he was half waked, for he now moved, and the next moment his head must have pitched directly into the red, yawning mouth of the bear but for Will, who, seizing him by the shoulder quickly drew him up, apparently to the indignation of the fierce animal below, which now commenced to growl louder than ever.

"Brian, wake up, wake up!" said Will, gently shaking him as he held on. "A bear!"

"A what?" said Brian, rubbing his eyes and staring confusedly at the speaker.

"A bear! There it is, right below us."

Brian looked down and saw the beast.

"Thunder!" he ejaculated. "How long has he been there?"

"I don't know, but I think not long."

"You pulled me up. Had I fallen?"

"Yes, your head slipped down. Had I not drawn you up, you would have been eaten by this time."

Brian shrugged his shoulders.

Then he looked at the bear.

"My sword will soon finish him," he said.

On putting his hand to his scabbard he discovered that his sword was gone.

It had dropped from its sheath while he was asleep, and he could now see it lying not far from the bear.

"That is too bad," said Will; "but, fortunately, I have my loaded pistol."

On putting his hand into his breast-pocket, however, he was surprised to discover that this, too, was gone.

It had doubtless fallen to the ground during some movement he had made in his sleep.

He scanned the ground as closely as he could from his present position, but he could not see the pistol.

"It is doubtless in the brush somewhere," he remarked.

Then the two boys looked at each other.

"What's to be done?" said Brian.

"We can do nothing but stay where we are."

"The bear may take a notion to climb up to us," said Brian.

"He would not succeed. We have our knives, and a thrust in the eye would send him back. The bear doesn't often try to climb a tree. It is slow work for him; he is too heavy and clumsy."

The boys sat watching the beast.

For some minutes he walked round and round the tree; then grasping the trunk, he commenced to climb.

The boys leaned over and thrust at his eyes with their knives, but the bear caught the points of the weapons on his thick skull and was but little injured by them.

"We will permit him to climb," said Will, at last. "As soon as he gets fairly up among the branches, we will drop to the ground, where you can obtain your sword and I can find my pistol."

"Capital," said Brian.

The twain retreated out upon a branch, and having waited until the bear was up on one of the boughs, with many other branches around him, which they thought would impede his movements, they allowed themselves to drop to the ground.

Will had not to hunt long for his pistol, which he found in some brush near the tree.

Brian also picked up his sword, and the twain were now ready to battle, if necessary, with their shaggy adversary.

As Will's ammunition was scant, however, and as Brian did not want to injure his sword by bending it against the tough hide of the bear, the two friends resolved to avoid a combat with the animal, if that were possible.

Accordingly they beat a leisurely retreat through the woods, and finally ensconced themselves in a hollow of a rocky elevation, where they hoped the bear would not be persevering enough to follow them.

But they were mistaken.

The animal had dropped from the tree, and was now coming toward them with a succession of curious sidelong leaps, and that way of looking askance with his blood-shot eyes which is peculiar to this animal.

"Here comes the black devil!" said Brian. "Don't let him come too close to us. I don't like his looks."

"Nor I," said Will, as he examined his pistol, to make sure that all was right.

"I don't think there's any use of our running any further," continued Will. "He will follow us, and catch us, too, if we do that. It is best to make a stand where we are and try to rid ourselves of him."

"I approve of that," answered Brian. "But I hope we will be successful."

On came the bear.

It climbed the rock and approached the boys.

Will waited until it was within a few yards of him, when, taking careful aim at one of its eyes, he pulled trigger.

The report of the weapon was heard.

But a movement of the bear's head caused the bullet to miss its eye.

It struck the head of the animal, plowing a ridge through the flesh over the scalp, but inflicting no serious injury.

But there were two barrels to the pistol.

The second shot was more successful than the first. It entered the animal's neck, passing through it slantingly.

A stream of blood now trickled down the bear's breast as he came on.

He lowered his head and muttered sharp growls of rage and pain.

Before Will could reload he was within a few feet of the boys.

Brian rushed toward him, raising his sword.

As he made a blow at the beast the latter rose on its hind feet and caught the blade in its teeth.

With a powerful jerk it pulled the sword from Brian's grasp, and then hurled it some yards away.

The next moment it had caught the boy in its paws, and hugged him in a vise-like grasp.

Will was horrified at the situation of his friend.

The bear thrust its opened mouth, with its sharp fangs, toward the neck of the youth; in which they must have been fastened an instant later but for the promptitude of his companion, who, having now reloaded, sprang forward and placed the muzzle of the pistol between the animal's teeth.

There was a sharp report, a growl of agony from the bear, and down he went, releasing his hold of Brian as he fell.

Will stooped close to the beast, which was now thrashing about on its side, and was about to lodge the contents of the other barrel in the bear's head, when the creature suddenly threw itself upon him, grasping the weapon and jerking it from his hand.

The pistol went off, the ball passing close to Brian's head.

Will now endeavored to regain his feet, but the bear knocked him down and made efforts to grasp him by the throat with its fangs.

Held to the ground by the ferocious beast, Will could scarcely move; but for the injuries the monster had already sustained it must soon have put an end to him.

As it was, the animal could not now move its neck with celerity, and by pressing back upon it with both hands the boy thus far had been enabled to keep it away from his face.

Exhausted as Will was, however, he would soon have been obliged to let go his hold, and would probably have fallen a victim to his fierce antagonist, had not Brian hastened to his rescue with the sword, which he had picked up.

The blade was badly bent, but the young captain soon succeeded in straightening it sufficiently for his purpose.

He ran up to the bear, and with a powerful thrust drove the keen steel through the body of the beast, which instantly fell away from the prostrate youth on its side, expiring.

As Will sprang to his feet the animal rolled over, quite dead.

CHAPTER VII.

AN UNEXPECTED EVENT.

BRIAN and Will shook hands.

"I was not deceived in you," said Brian. "You have the right sort of pluck. You have saved my life."

"Then we are quits," said Will, "for you have also saved mine."

The boys looked down at the bear.

"He will furnish us with provisions for several days," said Will. "Bear's meat is not to be despised."

"Have you ever eaten any?"

"Yes; I have seen them killed on this coast, and have tasted of the meat."

With his knife the youth went to work. He procured meat enough to last the two for several days.

"How are we to carry it?" said Brian.

"I will show you," said his friend.

He went to a cedar-tree, and, with his knife, stripped off some of the slender branches. With these, in less than half an hour, he had made a sort of rude vessel, or basket, which would easily hold the meat, and which could be carried on the arm.

An hour later the red streaks of dawn were visible through openings amongst the trees.

The boys kindled a fire, and roasted some of the bear's meat for a breakfast.

It made them an excellent meal, which, however, would have been better had they been able to procure a little salt to put on it.

Not far off there was a stream of pure water, with which they slaked their thirst.

"Now for a fresh start," said Brian. "Siberia is not so bad a place for travelers, after all."

"Wait until a couple of months from now, if you would know what it is. It is summer here at present; the grass is green, flowers are out, and it is warm weather; but in the middle of Autumn and in Winter it is a terrible place here in the wilderness."

"I hope we will get through, then, before that time comes."

"If we do not, we never will!" said the other. "We would be buried in the drifts, which are here twenty and thirty feet deep in the Winter."

The friends walked on, carrying the basket between them.

By noon, however, they were still in the woods.

"This is discouraging," said Brian. "It seems as if we are destined to never get out of this forest."

They were now climbing a rising bit of ground.

"Judging by the course we have taken," said Will, as he looked up through the trees at the sun, "I should think we ought to be pretty near the coast by this time."

There was a pine taller than those around it on the little hill.

"I will climb and take a look," said Will.

The branches commenced about ten feet above the ground, and the boy had soon swung himself up amongst them.

He climbed nearly to the top of the tree.

Brian saw him bend eagerly forward.

Then came a ringing cheer.

"Water, Oh!" cried the youth.

"Do you see the water?" inquired Brian.

"Yes; but there is something of a mist there, so that I cannot tell whether there is a sail off there or not."

"Never mind," said Brian, joyfully. "Now that the sea is sighted, our prospects look brighter."

Will came down, and the boys moved in the direction of the water.

When they reached the edge of the woods and saw the high land of the coast ahead of them, they paused.

A fire was made, and they cooked their dinner.

"We can have salt water to eat with our meat," said Will. "We are not more than a mile from the coast. I will go and get some."

"And I will see to the meat while you are gone," said Brian.

Will soon reached the coast.

He stopped, and was about to dip up some of the salt water, when he was startled to hear voices near him.

Looking through an opening amongst the rocks, he beheld, to his surprise, three persons—the very last whom he had expected to see.

They were Captain Vosk, the young Russian, a lady, evidently his sister, and Minnie Lewis.

The three were conversing in English, and every word spoken now reached the boy.

"No, Catharine," Minnie was saying. "You do not know me if you think, after what has happened, that I could ever be contented to go back to my uncle."

"But we are already within a day's sail of Okhotsk," said Catharine. "What are we to do? My brother feels that it would not be honorable in him to keep you away from your uncle. He will have to restore you to him."

"I feel that it is my duty," said Vosk.

"Why not leave me here?" said Minnie, the tears rising to her eyes.

"That would be barbarous!" said Vosk. "I would never forgive myself."

"It would be a good action," answered the young girl. "Sooner a thousand times would I remain here than go back to my uncle!"

Catharine now released the speaker's arm, and ran forward to obtain a shell which she saw.

Vosk then paused, and, bending down, said something in a lower voice than before to Minnie.

Will, however, could catch these words:

"Yes, if you will only consent—be mine—your uncle—freed from for ever."

It was easy from this to know the sense of what he had said.

He had made an offer of marriage to the young girl.

Will's blood ran cold.

Watching Minnie through the opening in the rock, he saw her cheeks glowing and noted her downcast eyes.

She was evidently about to answer, when Catharine again joined the two.

They stood looking at the sea in silence, until Minnie, quitting her companions, moved along the beach, probably to commune with herself.

Catharine seemed about to follow, when Vosk laid a hand on her arm.

He seemed to guess that Minnie wanted to think over, by herself, the proposal he had made to her.

The direction taken by the young girl led her past the very rocks behind which Will was concealed.

Crouching down, he waited until she was about opposite to him, when he thrust his head above one of the rocky fragments.

The gaze of the two met.

Fortunately the rocks were now between her and her two companions; otherwise they might have seen her pause and have heard the low exclamation, which she was unable to repress at sight of her brother's friend so suddenly appearing before her.

Recovering herself instantly, she came close to him.

"You here, sir," she whispered, her eyes brightening—"what does it mean?"

Will quickly explained.

"And so my brother is near here?" said the young girl.

"Yes."

"And you both have undergone so much hardship and hunger, all for my sake?"

"We were determined to go to Okhotsk and try to save you. Now it will not probably be necessary. Are there any of the Russians except Captain Vosk on the beach?"

"Yes, the boat's crew—only about a hundred yards off—there amongst that pile of rocks in the distance! The captain came ashore at the request of his sister, who wanted to gather some shells, and she persuaded me to go with her. The schooner lies off there in the mist, about a league from here."

"I will rescue you," said Will, "from Captain Vosk."

"No, no; he is well armed; besides, his crew would hear you and defeat your plans. You can do nothing now."

Will, however, coolly drew forth his pistol and looked at the cap on the nipple.

"What are you going to do?" gasped the young girl, trembling. "You are not going to shoot *him*?"

The manner in which Minnie emphasized the last word almost convinced him of her love for the young Russian.

"No," she went on, quickly; "I would not have blood shed on my account."

"I mean to give him a chance for his life," said Will, bitterly. "He has a pistol, too, in his belt, and we will be on equal terms."

"For God's sake, no!" gasped Minnie, and as she spoke she seized the pistol with both hands; "but I will try to get to you and my brother, if you will only wait for me—where did you say it was?"

"On the edge of the thicket, about opposite to this spot."

As she spoke, Will, looking through the opening in the rock, saw the Russian captain and his sister coming toward the spot.

Ere he could conceal himself they were so near that they saw him.

The captain started, laid a hand on his sword, and quickly advanced.

"You are my prisoner!" he said to Will.

"No, sir, not while I have this!" answered the youth, presenting his pistol.

The two young women interposed.

"Come, brother," said Catharine; "you had better not molest this young man. Let us go aboard."

"When I go, I shall take him with me," answered Vosk.

"Call your men, then," said Catharine.

"I think I am competent to capture him alone," said Vosk, smiling. "In fact, it is my duty to capture him, for he is one of the prisoners who escaped from Vormok's craft, as he told me when we spoke him yesterday."

Gently thrusting aside the woman, Vosk presented his pistol at Will, while the latter also leveled his at the Russian's head.

Both Catharine and Minnie begged them not to fire.

"Dead or alive," said Vosk to Will, "I must capture you. To surrender quietly would be your best plan, for even if my bullet should not kill you, you will be captured by my men, who are not far off."

"Here they come, now," said Catharine. "For God's sake!" she added, speaking to Will, "let there be no useless bloodshed."

"Fly!" cried Minnie to the youth. "They are coming fast. You can do me no good now. You will only sacrifice your life for nothing."

"He shall not escape me so easily," said Vosk.

But both the young women threw themselves in front of him and held his arms.

Will, hearing the shouts of the advancing Russians, darted off and ran around one of the rocks, which hid him from the gaze of the approaching crew.

He kept on, climbing the bank he had descended, and hurried toward the edge of the woods where he had left his friend.

But now he heard the noise of pursuit behind him.

The Russians had not yet climbed the bank, but they would soon do so, when they would obtain a glimpse of the boy.

The latter ran on. As he neared the edge of the woods he saw Brian sitting with his back toward him, evidently unconscious of impending danger.

At length, however, the pursuers appeared in sight.

Perceiving that the fugitive would evidently gain the woods, they paused and discharged at him their small arms.

Will heard the "zip" of the bullets as they cut the air above him, but he kept steadily on.

His friend's attention was now drawn in his direction by the noise of the firing.

Panting and nearly breathless, the youth was soon by his side, hurriedly explaining.

The two plunged into the woods, and finally concealed themselves under a heap of fallen pine-branches in a hollow.

They heard their pursuers pass their hiding-place, heard them as they searched here and there, looking behind trees and rocks.

At last the Russians seemed tired of their useless search.

Looking about them for a seat, they noticed the branches in the hollow.

Upon these they placed themselves in a reclining position, and commenced to laugh and chat with a careless freedom due to the absence of their commander, who, instead of accompanying them, had remained on the beach to take care of the ladies.

The situation of the two boys was now one of great peril.

The party seated on the branches were so near them they could have touched them with their hands.

Suddenly one of them leaned over in a listening attitude.

A rustling noise close to the boys was heard.

"Crouch lower," whispered Brian to his companion, "or they will see us."

Just then a squirrel darted out from among the branches, and ran along above them, passing across the very spot beneath which the fugitives were hidden.

As it did so, one of the men discharged his pistol at it.

The bullet just missed it and passed between the boys, narrowly escaping Brian's head.

But although they heard the whiz of the missile, the two friends never budged, as the noise which this would have caused them to make must have resulted in their discovery.

The squirrel ran on, and away went the men in pursuit of it.

"We are safe enough now," said Brian. "They will not come back. They are tired of hunting for us."

Will, however, advised that they should remain where they were a while longer, as the voices of the party could still be heard in the distance.

Half an hour later the boys emerged from their hiding-place to see the last of the Russians as he was passing over the bank which sloped to the shore.

"I suppose there is no chance of our getting Minnie away from those fellows on the beach," said Brian.

"I don't think there is. We will have to try Okhotsk next."

Not long after, from the summit of a tall tree which he had climbed, Will beheld the Russians' boat, as it glided with its occupants away from the beach.

"We may as well eat our dinner now," said Brian.

"I have not much appetite," said Will, sadly.

"Nonsense; cheer up. We will have her with us yet. Don't be so easily discouraged."

"I am not discouraged," said Will, "only——"

"Only what?"

"I scarcely think now that your sister will consent to go with us, even if we see her at Okhotsk."

"What makes you think so?" inquired Brian, much surprised.

"That Vosk made her an offer of marriage there on the beach. I was where I could not help hearing it all."

"Well, and did she accept him?"

"No."

"Cheer up, then," said Brian. "To make an offer and to be accepted are two different things. As she rejected him——"

"She did not reject him. She had no chance, just then, to either reject or accept. There was an interruption."

"But you think she will accept him the moment she has the chance?"

"I don't know. She is so anxious to leave her uncle—to escape from that Peter, that she might accept Vosk from sheer desperation, even if she did not love him."

"Love! pooh! Believe me when I tell you that Minnie could never love a fellow like that. True, he is good-looking enough, but he has an awkward way of carrying himself, and you know women don't like anything of that sort."

Will shook his head.

"No man is a judge of the kind of person of his own sex that a woman would like. The very man whom of all others you would feel sure would never please her may turn out to be the fortunate object of her choice!"

"I know that; but then this Vosk is so solemn and sedate. What woman ever liked such a person? As a general thing, a man who is a favorite with his own sex is *sure* to be sowith women."

"Not always; it is sometimes the very reverse, and——"

"Well, come, let's have some dinner, at any rate. One thing is very certain—women never like men with empty stomachs."

"A man with an empty stomach is certainly not apt to feel cheerful," said Will, "and is therefore in no humor to please. I think, now, I feel a slight return of my appetite."

They went to the edge of the woods, where they found their meat done to a crisp on the outside.

The inside, however, was found to be rich and juicy, and they made an excellent meal.

They then continued their journey.

CHAPTER VIII.

A RIDE.

IT was not until the third day after the incidents above described that the two friends came in sight of Okhotsk.

They were in a thicket of firs, over an elevated piece of ground, from which, in the far distance, they could just see the town.

They also noticed a couple of vessels lying off the sand-bar, and believed them to be the Russian brig and the schooner-of-war.

"Now, then, how are we to get into the town?" said Brian.

"We will have to wait until dark," said Will. "Here will be a good place for us to wait in," remarked he, pointing to a small deserted hut of logs, not far off, near the edge of the thicket.

The two boys entered the hut.

It contained one room, with no floor.

In one corner, however, there was a sort of rude cupboard or closet.

Brian went up to it and pulled aside the log-door.

Instantly he started back; then he recovered himself and laughed, as he pointed to a couple of sheepskin suits, such as are generally worn in Siberia by the Bouriaks and others.

"I thought at first sight they were human beings," he said.

A sudden idea flashed into Will's mind.

"We might dress ourselves in those suits," he said, "and, in that way disguised, we could enter the town without exciting much attention."

"The very thought that occurred to me!" said Brian.

The boys took down the suits and looked at them.

They were new—had evidently never been worn, and were, therefore, devoid of certain little insects which they might otherwise have contained.

"Here are also two pairs of leggins," said Will, as soon as they had put on their sheepskin suits.

"Yes; but do you think they will fit us?"

"They are too large; nevertheless, we can make them do."

The leggins having been put on, the two boys were completely rigged.

The lapels of the caps they allowed to hang well down about their faces, a great part of which was thus concealed.

By pulling up the collars of their coats their visages were almost entirely hidden.

Thus attired, they boldly emerged from the hut and advanced toward the town.

They had reached a beaten sort of track and were about to cross it, when the noise of creaking wheels fell upon their ears.

"There is a cart or carriage coming," remarked Brian, pointing down the road.

Looking that way, Will beheld an object shaped something like a shell and drawn by three horses.

This was a *tarantass*—a vehicle with a strong body and a high top or covering, in shape something like an old-fashioned American coach, except that the four wheels were far apart and secured to a sort of frame that projected far out behind.

The horses were fine-looking animals of the Tartar breed, and came on at a smart pace, driven by a Cossack seated on an elevated seat in the front part of the carriage.

In the other part were three persons, whom, as yet the boys could not see distinctly.

As they drew nearer, however, Will clutched the arm of his friend.

"Do you see her?" he said.

"See whom?"

"Your sister."

"My sister? Oh, yes, now I see her! Good heavens! where are they taking her to?"

"They must be going a good way. There are trunks and boxes."

"Ay, and there's Lofski and that confounded Peter."

"We are going to lose her now," said Will, despairingly.

"No, not if we have our wits about us," said Brian.

"What can we do?"

"We will get them to give us a ride."

"That Peter may suspect us. I am afraid he will see through our disguise."

"Not he; he is fast asleep, as you can perceive."

In fact, Peter sat lolling back, with his head on his father's shoulders, in a deep slumber.

He had evidently been up late on the night before.

"Leave me to deal with them," continued Brian; "but don't forget to talk broken English. We must pretend not to understand Russian. We will call ourselves Poles."

"It would be unfortunate if Lofski happened to know the language," said Will; "and I am half inclined to think he does. The Russians are very quick at learning languages."

"I did not think of that. However, we must run the risk."

"Why not pretend we are Spaniards?—I think we would be safer there."

"A good idea. We are two Spaniards, then, who have lost our way."

By this time the *tarantass* was but a short distance from the boys.

As it drew still nearer, and Lofski leaned over and scrutinized the twain, Brian held up his hand.

"Please to stop a moment, señor!" he shouted, changing his voice as much as possible.

Lofski caused the Cossack to stop.

The moment he did so, Brian continued:

"We are two Spaniards who have lost de way. Can you by help us giving little ride?"

Lofski was about ordering the Cossack to drive on, when Minnie, who occupied a seat opposite to her uncle, laid a hand on his arm and said, pleadingly:

"Do help the men, uncle. They may be very far away from where they want to go to."

"They are escaped exiles, I dare say," said Lofski, shortly. "I don't know but my best plan would be to inform the soldiers and have them arrested."

"No! for God's sake, no!" cried Minnie, with an earnestness that made Brian almost fancy she penetrated his disguise.

The expression of her face, however, at length convinced him that she did not.

As to Will, he could only stand, his heart beating like a hammer, as he looked up from under the rim of his cap at the lovely girl.

"We no exile," continued Brian. "If so, we no show ourselves and ask you for ride."

"Well, jump in," growled Lofski. "Take a seat there by my driver?"

"Thanks," said Brian, as he climbed up to the driver's seat, followed by his friend.

The Cossack whipped up his horses, and away they went.

"Where you go to?" said Brian to the driver.

The Cossack stared, but made no answer.

Brian repeated his question, but the man only shook his head, apparently not understanding a word of English.

Brian was glad of this, as it would enable him to converse unreservedly with his friend, and endeavor to mature some plan for the rescue of the young girl.

The noise of the carriage would drown the voices of the two sufficiently to prevent their words from reaching Lofski's ears.

The first thing to do," said Brian, "is to throw this Cossack into the road. You can leave that to me while you attend to the others. The moment I knock over the Cossack, I will stop the horses. Then you and I will pitch Peter and his uncle out of the carriage. Minnie will then be the only occupant, and we will have a carriage and good horses, it will be strange enough if we do not succeed in escaping with her."

"But how will we know which way to go?"

"Minnie can tell us."

This plan seemed as good a one as could be thought of, under the circumstances.

Brian was preparing to commence operations when he felt a hand upon his arm.

He turned, to meet the keen eyes of Peter, who had awakened, and was now leaning forward toward him.

"So you are a *Spaniard?*" said Peter, emphasizing the word in a peculiar manner.

"If you please, señor," said Brian.

"I like it you are so, whether I please or not."

"That is true, señor."

"Won't you raise the lapels of your cap, so that I can see your face?"

"I have a cold in my face, and that is why I keep the lapels down. I don't like to raise them."

"And your friend, there—he must have a cold, too, for I perceive that his lapels are also down?"

"Yes, he got cold, too."

"A remarkable coincidence," said Peter. "Nevertheless, I insist on seeing your face!"

Both boys perceived that Peter suspected them, and Will, concluding that it was now time to act, suddenly sprang up, caught the Cossack by the collar, and as he sat near the edge of the carriage, hurled him into the road.

The man fell upon his seat on the ground and pitched backward, his booted legs flying up almost over his head, and the reins leaving his hands as the horses sped on.

"Robbers! Thieves!" roared Lofski, rising.

"Sit down, sir!" said Peter, coolly, as he drew a pistol from his breast-pocket. "I think I know who these fellows are."

But ere he could take aim a swift blow from Brian's powerful arm knocked him into the soft grass by the roadside.

Minnie, white with terror, now clung to her uncle's arm.

Her brother raised the lapels of his cap, revealing his face to the young girl.

Peter and the Cossack were meanwhile running along road after the flying carriage, the former not daring to fire, lest he should hit Minnie or her uncle.

Soon a turn in the road hid the twain from the view of those in the carriage.

"My brother!" exclaimed Minnie, the moment she caught sight of Brian's face.

"Yes, it is I," said the youth; "and the other is my friend Will."

In an instant the cheeks of the young girl crimsoned, and an expression of surprise and pleasure crossed her face.

"Let go of your uncle's arm," said Brian.

"Do not hurt him!" pleaded Minnie. "Remember he is old!"

"Old!" roared the Russian, whose eyes were literally blazing with rage. "I will show these ragabouts how old I am!"

With that he aimed out straight from the shoulder a blow that struck Brian on the nose, almost knocking the youth off his feet.

Will seized the reins and checked the speed of the horses, while Brian, not at all discomposed by the punishment he had received, caught the struggling, wriggling Russian in his arms, and dropped him lightly out of the carriage into a ditch, where he sank almost to his waist in soft mud.

"Give me the reins," said Brian to his friend, "and I will drive while you explain matters to my sister."

Will complied.

Raising the lapels of his cap, he seated himself by Minnie, who, as she encountered his gaze, blushed deeply and dropped her long lashes over her beautiful eyes.

As the boy looked upon that charming face, he felt as if suddenly lifted into Paradise.

"I am so glad to see you again!" he said. "This is indeed a happy meeting."

Minnie looked up quickly.

The tone in which Will spoke, as if he were taking a holiday-ride with her, did not escape the notice of the young girl.

From his earnest countenance she looked toward her uncle in the distance, still floundering in the mud, and, far behind him, at Peter, whose short legs and enormous paunch as he ran on, shouting and gesticulating angrily, gave to him an appearance not unlike that of an ape.

Her sense of the ridiculous was at once excited, and she broke forth into a peal of merry, silvery laughter, which rang out so sweetly upon the air that even the horses pricked up their ears as if they loved to hear it.

As to Will, he was so entranced by the innocent mirth of the beautiful girl, that he felt an almost irresistible longing to fling both arms about her supple waist and cover her glowing cheeks with kisses.

"Excuse me," she said, at last, "but Peter looks so comical off there that I could not help laughing."

"This is like a bridal party," said Brian, urging the horses along at their topmost speed. "You, Minnie, will do for the bride, and Will for the bridegroom!"

Both Minnie and Will laughed, and neither of them, so far as Brian could judge, seemed displeased at his joke.

The young girl, however, with the natural shyness of her sex, proceeded at once to change the subject.

"Where did you get your disguises?" she said to Will.

The boy thereupon gave her an account of the adventures of his friend and himself after he left her on the beach.

"The deserted hut of which you speak," she said, "belongs to one of my uncle's tenants. He is now off on a fishing expedition, which accounts for his having left his shore clothes in the hut."

"Has he ever had them on?" said Will.

"I presume so."

Observing the expression of dismay on the boy's face, she added:

"But you need not be at all alarmed. He was different from the dirty Bouriaks whom you saw in the town; a very neat person, I assure you."

"I am glad to hear that," said Brian, from his seat in front. "I was about to take off the clothes, which are over my others, and fling them into the road."

"And I, too," said Will.

"On no account take them off," said Minnie. "They will serve you for excellent disguises."

"Have we far to go on this road?" inquired Brian.

"I know little about it," said Minnie; "as I never traveled in this direction before."

"We have lost sight of our followers, now," said Brian. "Wonder if Lofski has got out of the mud yet?"

"I have no doubt he has," said Minnie, "and the first thing he will do, as soon as he can, will be to send a party of Cossack horsemen in pursuit."

"We will have the start of them so much," said Brian, "that they will never succeed in overtaking us."

"I am not so sure of that. The Cossacks are good horsemen and ride like the wind."

"I wish, at any rate, I knew which way this road is taking us," said Brian. "It is almost like going blindfolded. Surely, Minnie, you must know where your uncle was taking you?"

"I have not the slightest idea. He merely said that we were to leave Okhotsk, nothing more."

"And so you have no knowledge of the route we are pursuing?"

"None at all."

"Captain Vosk took you back to Okhotsk, I perceive," remarked Will to the young girl.

In an instant Minnie turned pale and averted her face, while she answered in a voice that slightly faltered.

"Yes, he took me back, much against my will. I wanted him, after you quitted us there on the beach, to let me remain ashore."

"Had it not been for his men," said Will, hotly, "I should have rid you of his presence for ever."

"Oh! it was dreadful—both of you with your pistols pointed at each other! I was so glad neither of you had a chance to fire."

"Did you not feel sorry at leaving Okhotsk?" continued Will.

"No, I was glad to get away from there."

"I noticed two vessels in the harbor. One, I suppose, is Vosk's schooner."

"Yes," said Minnie, dropping her eyes and blushing in a way which was very painful to the boy.

"You like him?" he burst forth, impetuously.

Minnie looked up surprised at his warmth, and Will, suddenly remembering that he was comparatively a stranger to the young girl, colored deeply.

"The fact is," said Brian, rather bluntly to his sister, "my friend Will has an idea that you and that young Russian captain are on better terms than even your brother would like."

To this Minnie rather coldly replied:

"I have a right, I suppose, to choose my own friends."

"Of course, but you know that I would not be pleased to see you on very friendly terms with one of the enemies of our country."

"There is no further danger of that, if there ever was any," said Minnie, smiling, and yet speaking, Will thought, a little sadly. "Mr. Lofski, I believe, took me away from Okhotsk on purpose to get rid of this Vosk, who was a frequent guest at his house."

"And what had he against him?" inquired Brian.

"I don't know," said Minnie, and then added, blushing and laughing, "unless he thought that Peter's interests were menaced."

This was like a shaft in Will's heart.

Brian was puzzled, as all youths are apt to be, when they endeavor to sound a young woman on love topics.

One girl in such matters is a match for a dozen boys.

"Did Minnie love the Russian or did she not?" was the question which Will anxiously asked himself.

Brian pondered over the same question, and both boys set their wits to work to find out.

While Brian plied her on one side, endeavoring to draw her out on this subject, Will did the same, although in a more timid manner.

But it was like looking for a lost flower-seed in a bed of roses.

The thorns prick the fingers, but the seed is not found.

Like a butterfly, Minnie skillfully avoided being caught.

She parried the questions put to her, and yet contrived to answer every one.

Will received more than one stab in punishment for his curiosity.

Then, all at once, the young girl changed the subject, leaving both boys no wiser than they were before.

Brian endeavored to bring the subject back again, but in vain.

While this play of words was going on, something far more serious was in prospect.

The three horses, frightened at the horns of a deer, which were suddenly thrust up from the bushes, increased their speed, and were deaf to the combined voices of the boys, who found they no longer had control over them.

Minnie turned pale with terror.

"Oh, dear! what will become of us?" she gasped.

"I am afraid of the precipice."

"The precipice?" said Brian. "What do you mean?"

"I heard my uncle tell the Cossack, as we rode along, to be sure and turn off to the right, at some certain point, as he did not like to pass too near to the precipice."

"I don't think you need be afraid," said Brian. "The horses are going straight ahead, and will not turn to plunge over a precipice. They will not keep on long at this breakneck speed, and we will then be able to manage them."

Minnie was now so frightened that Will deemed it necessary to support her with one arm, fearing that, in her terror, she might be precipitated from the *tarantass*.

Suddenly the young woman pointed ahead, and a little to the right of the road.

"There it is! That is the precipice," she said.

"Perhaps you are mistaken," said Will.

He and Brian stood up and looked in the indicated direction.

"I see a ridge of rocks," said Will, "and—yes, there it is!—I see it now!"

"And I, too," said Brian. "But we are many yards to the left of it. There can be no danger."

As he spoke, however, the occupants of the vehicle beheld an unexpected barrier ahead of them. It was a fallen tree, which lay directly across the road, having probably been blown down during the late gales.

Both boys now pulled upon the reins with all their might, while they shouted to the horses.

Frightened as the latter were, they swerved to one side when they saw the impediment in their path, and darted off to the left.

The young girl uttered a piercing scream; her whole frame shook with terror, for the horses were now making straight for the edge of the precipice.

"I fear it's all up with us," said Brian, in a low voice, audible only to his friend.

"We must run the risk of jumping out. Better that than to go over that height, which will be certain death."

As he spoke Will stepped to the side of Minnie.

A coil of rope under the carriage-seat had caught his attention.

The Siberian drivers use ropes as well as leather for reins, and therefore they often go well provided with the former material.

The moment Will saw the coil he resolved to make use of it for the benefit of the young girl.

He picked it up, and fastened one end about her breast, under the arms.

"What are you going to do?" inquired Brian.

"You will see. Jump out, Brian, and if possible check the speed of the horses!"

"How can I do that?"

"By holding on to the reins. There is a tree we will pass. If you are quick you might contrive to tie the end of the reins about the trunk. The horses, speeding on, would break it, still it might check them a little."

There was not a moment to lose. The edge of the precipice was not now more than fifty yards ahead.

Brian sprang out, and as he had expected would be the case, he was hurled to the ground with great force.

But, fortunately, the soil here was soft, and covered with a thick growth of moss.

Not at all hurt, Brian rolled over on his belly as quick as a flash, and took a turn with the reins about the tree.

For a single instant the speed of the maddened steeds was checked.

Then the reins parted with a snap, and on went the horses.

Meanwhile Will had not been idle.

The moment Brian got the reins about the tree he lowered Minnie quickly to the ground, and by holding on to the rope the instant her feet struck the earth, and then letting go of it, he saved her from a fall.

A few seconds later he sprang out of the vehicle, and, like Brian, fell violently, but was saved from injury by the moss.

As he rose there was a wild cry from his companions.

He looked toward the precipice, and saw the horses making their final leap!

They disappeared over the edge of the height, and with them the *tarcandas*.

[To be continued.]

"Minnie's Rescue from the Wilds of Siberia" was commenced in No. 608.

AN ADVENTURE WITH TIGERS.

IN one of the jungles which skirt the jungle district in the Bombay Presidency there lived a native grass-cutter, named Hassan, who went each day to the jungle in company with his fellow-laborers to procure grass, which they stacked in bundles and sold to the travelers for their cattle.

On a certain occasion there was an unusual demand for grass, owing to a large party of travelers being expected on the morrow. Hassan determined upon doing something for himself, that he might reap a rich harvest out of his sale of grass.

Bent upon this purpose, and having a few hours of daylight yet remaining, he issued forth, accompanied by his only son, a youth of twelve. They had not proceeded far when a huge tiger sprang upon the boy and carried him away.

The poor father was completely panic-stricken with fear, and hastened with all speed to the village and raised an alarm. As it was too late to attempt to rescue the boy, darkness having already set in, it was determined to make an attempt on the morrow to track the tiger. An experienced shekaree offered to head the expedition.

Luckily, among the new arrivals on the following day was a party of English officers who had come out on a tiger-hunting expedition, and were well provided for the purpose, having with them two trained elephants. When the sad tale of the ill-fated grass-cutter's boy was told them they offered to assist the villagers in their hunt for the offending tiger.

The villagers, who were armed with spears and shields, formed the van of the party, and the officers brought up the rear.

On arriving on the spot where the boy had been seized by the tiger the villagers spread themselves out in pairs and commenced to "beat the bush" by raising piercing cries, and vigorously thumping some tam-tams, or native drums. The party of officers kept a sharp lookout in the meantime.

At last a point was reached where the tokens pointed to the probability of a tiger's lair being not far distant. Bones were thickly scattered about, and a peculiar rank smell clung to the spot. The elephants began to evince by unmistakable signs that they scented danger. They became very restless, trembled, and made that peculiar noise which always indicates uneasiness and dread. To the astonishment of both the officers and the villagers, a pair of tigers, male and female, made their appearance, accompanied by two cubs. This unlooked-for occurrence caused the officers, as true sportsmen, to be delighted at the number of the game, but yet to feel a nervous fear, for they conjectured that a desperate conflict was at hand, as tigers fight desperately, especially the females, when their cubs are in danger.

The parent tigers stood in the opening, apparently in a state of irresolution, whilst their cubs frisked and gamboled around them, unconscious of the presence of danger, and, as they stood in a defiant attitude, whisking their tails and glaring with anger at the intruders on the privacy of their domestic hearth, they formed a beautiful picture, indeed.

The attack was commenced by the officers, who delivered a well-directed volley, which badly wounded the male tiger and stretched one of the cubs dead. The tigress, which was unhurt, stood over her fallen cub and licked the blood which oozed from its wounds.

She appeared to be utterly oblivious of the danger which threatened herself, nor was she aroused from this state until she was struck by the second volley from the officers' rifles, by which she was severely wounded. The savage nature of the beast, and the maternal instinct for the safety of her young, now came out into bold relief. She was fully aroused and enraged, and uttering roar upon roar, she charged with impetuosity upon the nearest elephant.

AN ADVENTURE WITH TIGERS.—"FASTENING UPON THE ANIMAL'S TRUNK, THE TIGER ENDEAVORED BY PERSISTENT EFFORTS TO REACH ITS HEAD."

Fastening upon the animal's trunk, she endeavored by persistent efforts to reach its head. The elephant, however, displayed great tact in repelling the determined attempts of the tigress to reach higher quarters. He endeavored to coil his trunk around her, failing in which he whirled her aloft, and then sought to dash her to the ground. It was a very exciting scene for the party in the howdah, and the poor mahout had to cling for support to the same, or otherwise he would have been thrown to the ground. The officers could not use their rifles without running the risk of wounding the elephant. The officers on the other elephant could render no assistance either, for it would have been highly dangerous for them to have fired, as the elephant which was battling with the tigress was not in the same position for a moment together.

During this combat the male tiger, being very badly hurt, turned tail and made off as fast as his hurts would permit. A short pursuit found him in an impenetrable den. Roused from this with crackers, he gave a great bound, and slighted upon one of the villagers. Fortunately, he received the tiger upon his shield, and although quickly borne to the ground, he sustained but trifling injuries. His fellow—they had been stationed in pairs—drove his spear well home in the tiger, and then turned and fled.

The tiger, after snapping the staff of the spear with the greatest ease, left his prostrate foe, and pursued the fleeing man. The guide, who was near at hand, shouted to him to turn quickly aside to the left, which he did. The guide now sent his spear with unerring aim into the tiger, and he was followed by one of the other villagers, who also wounded him, and he was obliged to sink to the earth. The villagers now made a rush to dispatch him, but they were quickly compelled to flee, as the tiger rose on their approach, and prepared to renew the combat.

The guide now determined upon attacking the wounded tiger single-handed. With this intent, he stationed himself in front of the beast, and stood immovable until the tiger was almost upon him, when, springing quickly aside, he plunged his knife into the beast's neck as it passed him. The thrust was fatal, for the tiger sank to the earth dead. The carcass of the tiger was hung on a pole, and was carried in this manner by a couple of the natives, and the party retraced its steps to the spot where the others were.

In the meantime the efforts of the tigress to reach the elephant's head were rendered unsuccessful through the determined opposition with which they were met. She managed to get in rear of the elephant, and succeeded in springing on its hind-quarters.

One of the officers, Lieutenant Mildmay, had but time to utter an exclamation of alarm, and to raise his rifle mechanically, when the beast made for him, and seizing his rifle in her mouth, gave a violent tug, which caused her to overbalance, when, falling to the ground, she drew him with her. To seize the officer in her jaws and to make off with him was the work of a moment.

The remaining officers were completely horrified and almost paralyzed at the scene which they were witnessing. One of them, however, quickly recovered his presence of mind, and determined upon making an effort to save his comrade. He was a crack shot with the rifle; indeed, it was reported that he was the best in the Presidency.

Calling to the mahout to keep the elephant as quiet as possible, and cautioning his comrade to be perfectly still, he "drew a bead" upon the tigress, and awaited a favorable opportunity to deliver his fire.

Fortunately, she halted when she reached her cub, and upon turning to plunge into the jungle, presented a fair mark for the officer's rifle. Taking a steady and deliberate aim for a spot just below the ear of the tigress, he fired. Hurrah! The tigress rolled over in the agonies of death, but still retained the officer in her grip. The officers quickly dismounted, and running with all haste to the spot, were overjoyed to hear the voice of their friend, who said:

"I'm all right, but release me as quickly as possible."

This was quickly performed, and when the officer found himself safe, his emotions overcame him, and he fell to the ground in a swoon. When he revived, it was found that he had sustained no injuries from the grip of the tigress, which had only seized his clothing.

A DISCARDED SERVANT.—A MILKMAN'S OLD HORSE FOLLOWS HIS YOUNG RIVAL FROM DOOR TO DOOR, AND THEN GOES HOME TO DIE.

A DISCARDED SERVANT.

THE old horse of an East Weymouth (Mass.) milkman has had a romantic death. As soon as his young rival had started on the familiar route, the old horse trotted off, too, stopped at each door, as usual, and then went back to his stable and died.

A CHICKEN ON THE TRIGGER.

A SINGULAR gun accident recently occurred at Paine-hill-house, near Cobham, in England. The farm-bailiff, Mr. Heal, laid a loaded gun on the top of a corn-bin in the stable, and to his surprise he heard it some time afterward go off. The gun was fired by a fowl which got on the trigger, and the contents entered the face of an aged man named Colis, who had been employed on the estate for upward of thirty years.

AN OLD FRIEND FOUND.

A SOLDIER FINDS THE HORSE HE RODE THROUGH HIS CAMPAIGN.

THERE has transpired an episode which we think is of sufficient interest to be honored in type. A countryman had brought to a Western city and offered for sale a horse, informing the crowd that he was compelled to dispose of the animal. Just then a gentleman stepped forward and took a good look at the creature. After he had finished he quietly remarked:

"I want that horse."

He accordingly bid fifteen dollars, and continued to steadily raise each other until it was knocked down to him at thirty-one dollars. Some of the crowd laughed at his bargain, but he held his peace until he had paid his money and received the bill of sale. He then vouchsafed the simple statement:

"I rode that horse during the war."

A newspaper man, who happened to be one of the lookers-on, at once interrogated the purchaser upon the matter. He stated that his name was Charles Lindsley, and that he was a native of Nicholas County, Ky.

During the war he was a member of Captain Lee Hathaway's company, which served under Morgan at the battle of Cynthiana, Ky.

"I was riding that identical animal you see standing there, and both I and my horse were wounded. Come, I will show you the place where he was struck."

He walked to the head of his purchase, and, looking closely, found what appeared to be a faint scar on the left side of his neck.

"Now," said he, "to show you that I am not wrong in my opinion that he is my horse I will call him by his old name, and I'll bet that he recognizes it." "Sorrel Joe," said he, and sure enough the intelligent animal pricked his ears as if he fully understood the name.

Mr. Lindsley says that when he was wounded in the fight he was taken to the rear, and that somehow his faithful horse was left behind. From that time until now he has never seen his dumb companion of that hard-fought campaign. How he ever got there is a question, the countryman having bought him from a person in the city. Mr. Lindsley says no money could get the creature from him. He is going to take him and keep him in comfort the remainder of his days.

WILD ANIMALS.

LIONS BORN IN THE UNITED STATES AND THE MANNER OF RAISING THEM.—THE VALUE OF SOME ANIMALS.

PROBABLY less is known of the extent, value and number of rare and valuable beasts reared in our own midst than any subject of interest to the public. If horses, cows, colts and calves have a market value, so have tigers, lions and their young, for of the latter many are born in the United States every year.

During the past five years no less than seventeen little lions have seen the light of day, though only six reached years of maturity.

The details of their nursing are peculiar. The lioness is not approached until the cubs are fully three or four months old. They are then, by means of strategy, separated, and weaning commenced. A quart of milk, together with nice, boneless, juicy cutlets and tidbits are given them daily until the seventh month, which is the critical period of cubs. If they get over that, they stand a fair chance of living a long time, though the period of tooth-shedding, which generally occurs at twelve months, is attended with danger.

It is a known fact that lions attached to traveling vans, under proper care, are the most healthy and lively, and thrive better than those in zoological gardens. In this country a lion has been exhibited thirty-five years, and, as far as could be judged, was fifteen years old when captured; so that he certainly was over fifty when he died. In eight out of ten cases congestion of the lungs carries them off.

The amount of food given a lion is less than one would suppose, thirteen pounds of beef every day, with bones *ad libitum*, being a fair allowance. When fed regularly they show little disposition to glut themselves, and will rarely exceed fifteen pounds, even though a chance be given them.

The greatest of care is exercised in keeping their cages clean, as they are constantly shedding their hair, an accumulation of which adhering to their food, and, being swallowed, makes them sick.

The largest number of these animals is imported from the French province of Algeria. There is no affection in a lion; he knows his keeper and fears him, and will obey him, but there is no affection between them. The value of lions is varied, though a good pair will readily bring $4,000, and the demand is constant. Rare animals are sought after constantly by the various zoological institutions and menagerie-owners, and in many instances they have paid fabulous prices for the more rare species. Tigers command about the same price as lions, but are comparatively scarce, and not so popular as the lions.

Elephants always find a ready market, two or three being imported yearly into this country, and sell without trouble at $6,000 to $8,000. Even a dead elephant will find a ready buyer at from $100 to $300. The African specimens are the finest, being twice the size of their Indian brothers.

Giraffes are exceedingly rare in the United States, in nearly every case being able only to make the voyage from the Cape to England or the continent. The voyage to this country enfeebles them so that many die during the trip or immediately after landing here. The least cold sensibly hurts them. They are dainty feeders, and given much to consuming cabbages. They are valued at from $8,000 to $10,000 a pair.

The rhinoceros and hippopotamus market is always an active one, as very few have ever reached this country alive. The bath of the latter renders his transportation almost impossible.

The South American monkey is always in demand, while those of Africa are a drug on the market, they being dull and lazy, and easily caught. The methods of catching them are numerous. In South America the natives fill gourds with rum, which the monkeys drink, and becoming totally unconscious under its effects, are easily taken. In Africa wooden vessels are used, into which they thrust their hands and cannot remove them. They range in value all the way from $1 up to $500.

Africa is the great stock farm for animals. The Boers, a hundred or two miles above the Cape, are constantly catching animals, and they find a ready market at Cape Town for them.

Stories of animals and animal-catchers are numerous and marvelous, but many of them are so tainted with exaggeration that it is asking too much of common-sense readers to wade through them.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."

AN esteemed correspondent, Captain J. Codman, writes the following interesting account of the wonderful doings of his favorite black-and-tan terrier, "Fan": "Every woman's baby is "the sweetest, cunningest baby that ever lived," and so every man's dog is the one that knows the most. I allow for the partiality of other people, while I claim precedence for my own.

A CHICKEN ON THE TRIGGER.—A SINGULAR GUN ACCIDENT NEAR COBHAM, ENGLAND.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."—FAN BRINGING HOME HER PUPPY AFTER ITS NAME HAVE BEEN CLIPPED.

From the day when, as a small pup, Fan looked up into my face from her basket with a beseeching expression, saying as plainly as words could speak, "Take me away from this horrid man; I am willing to leave my brothers and sisters to come and live with you," for all the fourteen years that she was a member of my family, we had daily familiar conversation, and understood each other's language perfectly.

Like all smart young ones, she did things in her childhood and early youth that astonished us, and gave us opportunities of repeating, "Just think what Fan did!"—when she was lost in the snow storm, when she drove in the carriage, hid away that bone, and performed a hundred other little acts of intelligence.

When she grew up to womanhood, and her young maternal heart was gladdened by the appearance of the first of her numerous progeny, what astonishing foresight did she exhibit in preparing and suitably furnishing the place of their birth! What a proud little mother she was! She would allow no stranger to approach her family; but when any member of the household came near, she would tell us with her eyes that we might handle them, "but be very, very careful," she said, "not to squeeze them."

I gave one of the puppies to a neighbor across the road. Every morning at ten o'clock precisely Fan would go to visit her little boy, spend a few minutes with him to see that he was all right, and then go home to attend to his brothers and sisters. When Tommy underwent the torture—you may be sure it was in his mother's absence—which most little black-and-tans are subjected to, of having his ears clipped, and his mamma called upon him the next morning, she was so indignant at the treatment he had received, that after sympathetically licking his wounds, she took him by the loose skin with her teeth, and brought him home, where in the future he would be safe.

I could fill pages with anecdotes illustrating her intelligence. With those wonderful eyes, she could express any emotion. The promise of a walk or drive would make them sparkle with infinite delight, and words of affection and sympathy would moisten them with tears. She understood the English language so that she comprehended most conversational terms, and I expect to be believed when I say that she was a proficient in some foreign tongues. She was the companion of my voyages. Often seated together on the transom, we used to talk to each other of home and of those we had left behind us, and then what Mr. Sparrowgrass so aptly termed "the dog's organ of recognition" would wag with an intensity of pleasure. When at anchor in the Bay of Rio de Janeiro she would run to the gangway on the instant that I ordered the gig to be manned, and when the boat came alongside the ladder, she would be the first to descend and take her place on the forward grating. Once, she happened to be below when the boat was called away; but hearing the splash of the oars as we passed under the stern, she rushed up on deck, and leaping over the taffrail, swam toward us and was picked up. I never lost her in that great city; but it, as was often the case, she missed me in the crowd of negroes, market-women, and processions in the thronged streets, knowing every one of my various haunts, she would go around calling at the consul's, ship-chandler's, and consignee's offices. If she found me in none of these, she would then go to the hotel where I dined, and wait patiently till I came. Once, when we went to the botanical gardens far out of town, where "dogs are not admitted," though people of less intelligence go in, she broke away from the keeping of an old negress at the gate, and arrived at the hotel an hour before us.

I have said that she understood several languages. She picked these up in foreign ports. In Buenos Ayres, when "*carne seca*" was mentioned to her she would turn away with disgust, while "*galina*"—for she dearly loved roast chicken—so powerfully stimulated her appetite that she skipped with joy. Yes, she did know somewhat of Spanish and Portuguese, for our crews while employed on the South American coast were made up of men of those nations. As for French, her daily intercourse with Jules, the steward, made her very conversant with that language. When Jules, in a fit of hasty temper, would call her "*Sacré diable de chienne*," she would translate this rude and vulgar reproach to herself, and turn away more in sorrow than in anger. But when the relenting steward, who was at heart too fond of her, would call her back with "*Fan' ici, mon ange*," she would come to him and kiss his hand forgivingly.

Old age at last comes unbidden upon dogs as upon all of us. Fan's increasing infirmities rendered her unfit longer to endure the discomforts of a sea life. With tender care for her declining years I boarded her out with a farmer who lived near to my old homestead, and frequently calling upon her when at home, I was glad to find that my confidence was not misplaced. "I knew you was coming," Mrs. Pitman used to say, "for Fan she's been out to the gate a-caperin' round every day this week past."

At length, one day when I had returned from a long voyage I rode out to the place. Not seeing Fan at the gate I hailed Mr. Pitman, who was at work near by in the field. He approached slowly, and with a sad and downcast air.

Reaching out his hand, in which he grasped mine, he laid the head upon his arm over the pommel of the saddle, and in reply to my question, "Well, how's Fan?" he gasped, spasmodically:

"Cap'n, that ere dog's—dead!"

"Dead!" I exclaimed, with emotion as unaffected as his own.

"Yes, sir, poor old Fan's dead!" and then, with tears in his eyes, he looked mournfully in my face.

"How was it, Pitman?" I asked.

"Well, cap'n," he replied, "I'll tell you all about it. You see, it was on Tuesday night, the 25th of October, Fan had been failin' for some time, leastways she hadn't been in good spirrits all Summer, but I didn't think there was any likelihood of her breakin' up so sudden. However, toward Fall, I see she had hard work to get up and downstairs. Bimeby them eyes of her'n didn't talk the way they used to—they was kind o' glassy—and then she begun to lay around, as if she expected to give up afore long. But she was resigned, and I do believe if ever a dog was prepared she was. Still, I wan't cal'latin' that it would come so soon. Well, on that 'ere Tuesday night, as I was a sayin', I come home from work. It was kind o' chilly, and Fan she was layin' in a little box I had fixed for her, close by the stove. I thought I heer'd her groan a little mite more'n common, and I was goin' to look at her, and see if anything partic'lar was the matter. But Miss Pitman, says she, 'Taint nothin'; come sit down and get your supper.' Now, cap'n, I don't think my wife was anyways hard-hearted, and she didn't really know how bad the poor creetur was, but it was as much as ever I could forgive her for not lettin' me have a last word with Fan. So I eat my supper, and as I didn't hear Fan groan any more, I thought likely she'd gone off to sleep. But when I did come, I went to take a look at her, and there she lay—dead! Her forepaws were dropped right over heart, and she looked as calm and peaceful as ef she was dreamin' and felt happy. Miss Pitman and I and the children, all took a dreadful that night, cos 'twan't no use—her time had come, as it must come for us all. Next mornin', I did just as you ordered, in case such a thing should happen. But I wouldn't trust Pope to do it. I made her little coffin myself. I painted it black, and then put her in it. Oh, she did look beautiful! Somehow 'mother she'd growed younger and looked the way she used to afore she'd had so much care and trouble! That night I come early from work a purpose, and I took her up to the old garding just at sundown. There I dug a grave for her under the willer on the upper side, cos'se I didn't want the shadder throwed over her. I laid her in and kivered her up. Next Spring I'll plant rose-bushes all round her."

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."—FAN OVERTAKING HER MASTER IN A BOAT IN THE BAY AT RIO DE JANEIRO.

THERE is a story told of Daniel Webster as follows: The underwriters on a certain vessel heard that she was scuttled off Cape Cod, and hastily sent up to Mr. Webster's office and paid him a retaining fee of a considerable amount. The officer who took this precaution had scarcely got back to his place of business when he found a courier, who had ridden overland to inform the company that the ship was not scuttled by her captain, but was a legitimate wreck, and therefore litigation would not be reasonable. The officer hastened back to Mr. Webster, in hopes that his deposit would be refunded. He told the case to that pompous man as briefly as possible, and the great Webster replied: "Then I understand you to say that you will not bring suit in this matter?" "That is it, Mr. Webster." "Very well, then," replied the great man, "in that case I shall make no further charge."

DARKNESS shows us worlds of light we never saw by day.

THREE BOYS.

A Story of a High School.

By WILLIAM O. STODDARD.

CHAPTER XXXII.

THERE had been less of sound sleeping than usual done at Mrs. Porrance's that Thursday night, but the boys went out on Friday with a stern determination to appear "just as if nothing at all had happened."

They succeeded admirably well, too, in spite of the fact that Pat Nolan had a long errand at Martin's gun-shop in the afternoon. The old gunsmith was even more excited than the "red-headed Irish boy."

"It's not the money I care for," he said to Pat; "I'll never say a word to you about that. But you and the other two must do your level best to help Murray cage those rascals. If there's any kind of rogue I hate it's a counterfeiter. They're the enemies of society. Ought to be hunted down like so many wolves."

"I'll do my share," said Pat, and Murray added: "I believe he will, and you never saw a cooler pair of youngsters than his chums. They'd make detectives, both of 'em. It's the best bit of fun I've had for many a long day, this pigeon-shooting thrown in."

The only special incident of the day at the academy was in the class in history, when Sol Rogers was asked, "What were the consequences of the battle of Waterloo?" and he vaguely answered:

"It made a ragged gap."

"So it did," said Doctor Bette, with a smile. "There was a good deal of shooting done, was there not?"

"Yes," said Sol, bravely; "but they did it on Sunday. We do ours on Saturday."

The class saw that it was safe to laugh, for the doctor himself set the example.

On a whole, that Friday was about as long a day as any the boys could remember, and they ate the last of their mince-pies before they went to bed.

"So we won't dream," said Sol.

Dreams or no dreams, however, they were ready for breakfast, with the pony all hitched up, before breakfast was ready for them, and Murray himself was already loafing listlessly around in front of the house, with a double-barreled gun in his hand.

Miss Almira managed to get a good look at him, but voted him a most unromantic and commonplace sort of being. So much so that it was not worth her while to come to the gate when the sportsmen clambered into the topless buggy and drove away.

"Now, boys," said Murray, "we're in for a big day."

"We mustn't neglect our pigeons, though," said Sol. "There must be a pie at Mother Porrance's to-morrow, or there'll be mourning. I'll give you all I will look out for the pie. kill."

When they reached the forks where the woodroad branched off toward the log-house, the detective said to his friends:

"Now for some scouting. Van, you come with me. The others can stay here till we get back. I want a look at the shanty."

Very carefully he went for it, too—he and Van slipping along behind trees and bushes like a pair of red Indians, or as if they were stalking a deer.

It took them longer, therefore, to reach a spot from which they could have a good view of the cabin and the clearing.

"Hist!" whispered Murray to Van; "it's all as you described it, to the last inch. But don't you see? One of 'em's getting ready to go somewhere. He isn't taking the wagon. Only packing that heavy little valise on a horse. Means to lead him through the woods. Don't want any wheels. The other fellow and the dogs 'll stay at home. We mustn't go any nearer or the dogs 'll scent us. I reckon I understand now. Let's hurry back and make for the Gap. He'll recall hitched up, before we will."

Van, too, thought he understood. The distance was too great for close criticism, but it was a queer thing to see two men take hold of so small a thing as that which Murray pronounced to be a valise, and that thus one of the squatters should lead the horse they put in on right into the woods.

"They wouldn't have done that," said he to Murray. "if they only meant to bury it somewhere."

"Right, my boy. We'll see what becomes of it. I'll have that load in my hands before I'm a day older. See if I don't."

The results of the "scouting" were freely told to Sol and Pat, and the pony was started for the Gap.

"Not too fast," said Murray; "and you must find a place to hide him before long, so that we can push ahead on foot."

There were stray squads of pigeons now beginning to fly around them, but not a shot was fired.

"Plenty of time for them," said Van. "But what an awfully rough road this is getting to be!"

Less than a mile further and it became plain that they could go faster on foot. A good, shady, safe sort of a hollow was therefore picked out. The pony was unhitched, tethered, given a wisp of hay, and left behind. Then the detective and his three assistants pushed forward as if the fate of an army depended on their sagacity and speed.

"We must keep in the woods, boys, and skirt along the road. There's no telling what we may see."

Oh, how temptingly near were some of those pigeons! Squirrels, too, made their appearance. It was hard to give them all up, but it was not long before Pat Nolan, who had gotten a little ahead, turned suddenly and raised his hand.

All four of them were crouching together behind a sumach-bush in less than no time.

There was no mistake.

There, in the middle of the Gap road, rough as it was, stood a pretty good-looking horse, facing the other way, with a stout sort of wide-seated "sulky" or two-wheeled wagon behind him. Into that wagon they saw two men, one of them the squatter who had made Pat his errand-boy, lift the valise they took from the back of the thin beast that had carried it that far. They saw, too, the man of the "sulky" slowly count out and hand over what seemed like a number of bank bills or "greenbacks."

"Paying for the speltzer," whispered Murray. "Now, boys, I'll have to follow that fellow when he goes. You tell Martin what's become of me. Hullo, he's got a gun. Is he going to shoot?"

He was, indeed, for he had just been remarking to the squatter:

"I reckon there'd be birds or something. Now our biz is fixed I mean to have a little fun."

"All right. We can knock over as many as you want. It's just as well you shouldn't strike the valley till arter sundown."

"That's just the thing," said Murry to Van. "I'll take the woods on the other side of the road, and wait for that chap at the foot of the Gap beyond the mountains. Won't I fix him! You go back a ways before you use your guns."

"Don't you be scared about us," said Van. "If he should see us, he'll think we came at his own invitation."

"So he will. Good-by. You'll hear from me again."

And without any further formalities the detective slipped away through the woods, and the boys were left to their own devices. Back they hurried for nearly half a mile, and then if anything worth shooting at got by them without a peppering, it was because they did not happen to see it.

"This begins to look like pie," said Sol Rogers.

"Biggest kind of one," said Van. "Why, we've seven gray squirrels in little more than an hour."

"And the pigeons! We must have pretty nearly a dozen apiece. Pat, there's a lot in that tree; just about a good range for your cannon. That'll help you catch up with us."

He had been several birds behind up to that time, and only one of the squirrels had fallen to his share.

Half in vexation, therefore, he had poured an extra charge of powder and shot into his revolutionary gun, and he drew a good bead on those thickly-clustering pigeons.

Neither he nor his friends, however, had stopped to consider that for some time they had been working their way up the Gap again.

The roar of Pat's discharge was followed not only by the tumble of several birds, but by a loud shout from the bushes beyond, and then by a hail in anything but the choicest words.

"You young vagabonds! Who are you shooting at?"

It was the squatter and his friend who came rushing into view, the latter rubbing one of his arms, and seeming to have been made more or less a pigeon of by Pat's loose shot.

"He isn't hurt much, Pat," said Van. "The shot are too small to go into a man far at that distance. He is mad, though."

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."—FAN ESCAPING FROM HER KEEPER AND RETURNING TO HER MASTER'S HOTEL.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."—FAN AND HER MASTER TALKING OF HOME IN FOREIGN LANDS.

THE LIFE AND DEATH OF "FAN."—THE CHILDREN AT FAN'S FUNERAL.

So he was; but while he was coming nearer and telling them so, they all had a good look at his face. It was by no means a hand-some one, but they thought they should remember it.

"Do you mean to say," asked Sol, "that only one shot struck you?"

"Right on my arm, here."

"Well, I thought Patrick Nolan could do better than that. If you'll go back and let me try, I'll beat it all hollow."

"Oh, it's all right, Smith," interposed the squatter. "Those are the boys I told you of. I say, youngsters, you pack up your birds, and do your shooting lower down. The Gap's big enough for us all."

"But that shot in my arm——"

"Nonsense. It's only skin-deep, I'll bet. Besides, these sin't the sort of chaps to quarrel with."

"Pat," said Van, "pick up your birds. We'll go down the road. If the sport keeps up we'll have to go to our cart and get rid of our loads."

"You're all right," said the squatter, "only I'd rather keep out o' range o' that long gun. It's a reg'lar buster."

"It's made Pat's string longer than either of ours," remarked Sol. "Nine pigeons and one man at one shot."

They were just as well contented to go down as up, however, and the squatter and his "sulky" friend turned back with a mistaken assurance that the three boys knew nothing of the horses or the "cargo" at the head of the Gap. Little they imagined how thorough an inspection had been made by the New York detective while they were shooting pigeons.

"Ain't we laying in a pile," exclaimed Sol, an hour or so later. "It's almost getting tiresome."

"The more the merrier," said Van. "Mrs. Porrance means to have a crowd to-morrow, and she's been baking all sorts of pies. We'll have our share."

CHAPTER XXXIII.

WHEN Murray parted from the three boys he pushed forward for some distance under cover of the woods. He carefully avoided all risk of exposing himself to the eyes of the squatter or the "sulky" man, but he did not for one moment lose sight of them. He even followed them for some distance after they set out on their pigeon-shooting, but only until he was sure they were well out of sight of the sulky itself.

Then, indeed, he hurried back like a man with business on his hands.

He did not open or remove the valise, an oblong, black, leather-covered sort of an affair, but he lifted it and set it heavily down again, saying to himself:

"A good lot of it, but it's well-packed. It doesn't give a chink. Now I'll go down to the other side and do my own shooting. The more birds I have the less he'll suspect me, and the safer I'll be of a ride in with him."

On he went, therefore, and the road on the other side of the mountains was no better than that toward Bunkerville, but it did not seem to have as much "game" about it. Still, there were pigeons and squirrels, and Murray did not hesitate to shoot a poor old woodchuck that came out to look at him. He was a good shot, and by the middle of the afternoon he had quite enough of a "string" to sustain the character of a "sportsman," when the man with the sulky came along out of the Gap.

"Give ye a ride?" was the surly response to his first greeting. "Wall, no, I guess not. I've all I want to kerry."

"Don't say give me anything. I'll pay a dollar for a lift. Do you s'pose I want to walk ten miles with all these birds and things?"

"A dollar? Well, now, that's a different thing——"

It would have looked suspicious to have refused an offer like that, and, much against his will, the sulky man consented. We had no notion, however, how well the New York detective was pleased at having the change for the five-dollar bill he offered, in payment for his ride, handed to him in bright, new, shining, silver half dollars.

He could not have asked anything better just then, and he set out to make himself the most agreeable kind of a road companion.

It was, as Murray had suggested, a good ten miles to the village at the railway station, to which they both were bound, and by the time they arrived there it was quite dark. During that ride, however, the detective had acquired a good deal more information than his companion dreamed of giving him, and had made up his mind about what course to take. Not to wander too long and too far from the three young heroes of Bunkerville Academy, it is enough to say that before two weeks were over, there had been at least a score of arrests made in town and country, in consequence of what was picked up by Murray during his day among the pigeons.

The biggest pigeon of all was the man to whom he paid a dollar for a ten mile drive in a sulky.

Great was the pride of Van Rivington and his two friends over the shooting they were able to make on their arrival at the Porrance's, and that good lady was almost enthusiastic, not to say very nearly affectionate, in the expression of her gratification.

"Why, Almira," she said, "we can fricassee the squirrels and make a pie of the pigeons. We can roast some, too. And after all that there'll be more than we can eat, open if they all come, and I know they will."

"We brought 'em all home this time," remarked Van.

"But what shall we do with the rest? We don't want pigeons every day."

"Of course not. Send half a dozen or so to Mrs. Belden, and a good big string to Mrs. Sligo."

"The very thing. I'd like to get ahead of those Beldens, and I know Mr. Sligo likes pigeons."

"Docter Betts——" suggested Sol.

"He can go without, for once," said Van. "But, Mrs. Porrance, are we not to have some supper?"

"Supper? Yes, indeed. Almira, bring in that pie. Both of 'em. If you boys haven't earned 'em this time, then nobody ever did."

Hot mince and pumpkin, hungry boys, a beaming landlady, and a grand dinner in prospect for the morrow.

Still, even while they were eating, the young sportsmen would have given something to have known a little more about what Murray was doing on the other side of Ragged Gap.

After supper, while Pat was at his chores, Sol and Van went down to Martin's to make their report, and the old gunsmith chuckled all over as he exclaimed:

"He'll get 'em, he'll get 'em. You're the boys for me. Tell Pat I don't care a cent for the money, and I'm right glad he isn't stuck in any sort of scrape."

Right glad was good little Mrs. Sligo of her share of the birds, but there was a bigger puzzle than ever in the mind of Mrs. Belden.

"No," she said to herself, "she'd never have done it of her own motion. I've got to thank her, I suppose, but it's all the work of those boys. They're real little gentlemen, especially that handsome young fellow from the city. We must get better acquainted with them."

There was no trouble about the soundness of the sleeping done at Mrs. Porrance's that night. In fact, it was no easy job to get up in time for breakfast, and to dress for church the next morning; but it was made out, after a fashion.

And all the while Mr. Sligo and Mr. Belden were preaching, the pigeon pie was baking, and the stuffed birds were roasting in Mrs. Porrance's oven; and the squirrel fricassee was slowly simmering away; and neither Van nor Sol, nor Pat, nor their landlady and her daughter, could quite succeed in driving those important facts out of their minds.

Worse than that, at least a dozen excellent people in Mr. Sligo's congregation caught themselves, several times, in the very act of wondering "what Mrs. Porrance would have for dinner this time."

They were, every one of them, sure it would be something nice, for they had great confidence in Mrs. Porrance, and they felt equally certain there would be no second failure in a proper supply of pies, to wind up with.

Not one of them was overlooked by the portly widow, and not one of them refused to come.

Had they not counted on that very thing for a whole week?

Nor were they disappointed when they came to sit down around the good cheer provided for them.

"Those boys again?" roundly exclaimed old Deacon Whitlock, a big-bodied, round-faced farmer from the hills, when, at Mrs. Porrance's request, he said grace and began to open the pigeon pie. "Do you mean to say we owe them a second game dinner? Wal, I do declar! Tell you what, Sister Porrance, there's only one way out of this. You and Almiry'll have to come and eat your Thanksgivin' turkey at our house, and bring the boys along. We ain't got no young folks to speak of, but they kin bring their guns and amuse themselves, and I'll promise 'em all they kin eat, best kind."

"Don't you say no, Mrs. Porrance!" exclaimed Van.

"Indeed I won't, then; you may be sure of that. It's only about nine miles to drive. Will your house hold us all, deacon?"

"Hold 'em? It'll hold a regiment. I'll hev ye stay all night. There's loads of room."

The steam from that pie was rising in the good deacon's face, and it opened his heart and thawed his hospitality all the more, because he was very hungry indeed, and because of a sort of weakness he had for fat pigeons.

The boys felt that they had made a good investment—both for themselves and Mrs. Porrance, and she beamed upon them as she had never beamed before.

"Perhaps," muttered Sol Rogers to himself, "it may even lead her to repent of her corn before pig-killing time."

At all events, by the time the mince and pumpkin-pies were served the Thanksgiving-dinner business was all settled.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

IF there is any one thing in the wide world that is entirely satisfactory to all concerned it is a November rain among the hills of New England.

Beyond a doubt it is an exceedingly useful thing, doing all sorts of good to land and trees and crops, to springs, lakes, rivers, and so forth; but, for all that, it is dismal while it lasts.

Then, too, it is apt to last so long.

That one did.

The September and October weather had been glorious, the very perfection of an American Autumn, but with that memorable morning the clouds and the east wind began their work, and they kept at it steadily all the week long.

No ball-playing on the green, no skylarking at noon recess, no fun of any kind that boys care for was possible during that cold, chilling, steady pour.

The only consolation was the oft-repeated remark of Mrs. Porrance that she "was glad it had come now, so's to have done with it and make sure of good weather for Thanksgivin'." And Sol Rogers had added:

"Well, it does look as if all the bad weather there was would be used up if this thing keeps on."

So the boys spent a good deal of time in their room, where Mrs. Porrance had now put up a good, square-built, cast-iron stove, and they did good work on their lessons. They did even more than that upon Pat Nolan's big volumes of novels, and in practicing all the songs they knew of. Besides that, they took time to write a wonderful lot of long letters home, giving the most graphic accounts of their experiences thus far as students of Bunkerville Academy, and as sportsmen extraordinary for Ragged Gap and the surrounding country.

Even a rainy week, however, with a rainy Sunday at the end of it, must come to an end, and so it was with that one.

Even Bob and Joe Hinckley, who had made their appearance again, with clean faces, put on a show of cheerfulness and good nature when the sun came out bright and clear with the opening of "Thanksgiving week."

Monday and Tuesday would be regular school-days, of course, but so many of the scholars were going on Wednesday to be home on Thursday, that there was small use in opening the academy on either Wednesday or Friday. So that part of the week was about as good as one long holiday, and the boys prepared to treat it as such.

"Somehow or other," said Van, "we must work into the affections of Deacon Whitlock. I want to see what sort of a thing a New England farm is. They say his is a good one."

"Biggest kind," said Sol. "I know all about him. He isn't exactly mean, but he isn't an easy sort of a man to get inside of."

"Guess not. Anyhow, we're to go there. Something'll turn up, sure's you're born."

They were scarcely looking for the precise thing that turned up that Tuesday evening.

It was Denis Mullaly, and with him no less a man than their friend Murray.

The two came straight to the house and to Van's room, where Sol was already, and Pat was quickly summoned.

"It's all fixed," said the detective. "We're to gobble 'em to-morrow. Denis and I thought it was only fair to you boys to have you come along. Don't say a word to anybody. Cut school. We'll start from the tavern with a team of our own about eight o'clock. What do you say?"

"Say?" exclaimed Sol. "What do we say? Did you s'pose we'd say we wouldn't come?"

"Little o' that," said Denis.

"We'll be on hand," said Van. "Even Pat'll raise courage to be one of that crowd—won't you, Pat?"

"Will I? Won't I? Would I ever forgive myself if I didn't?"

"We've got 'em all!" said Murray. "Three of our fellows are to come through the Gap. You can bring your guns along, but I guess there won't be any time to go for pigeons."

Denis and Murray made their call a short one, but they left behind them the three most excited and uneasy boys in Bunkerville, or almost anywhere else.

"Van," said Sol, "it sounds like something out of a novel."

"Novel? Did you ever read anything better than it's been from the first? If it were all written out and printed, nobody'd believe a word of it."

"I would, then," said Pat, "and I'm going to write the whole of it for my mother and old Maguire."

It was well they had one another to talk to, or it would not have been so easy to keep so big a secret; but keep it they did, and there was small chance of their being seen in Bunkerville after eight o'clock next morning.

Nor were they, and even Mrs. Porrance and Miss Almira wondered how they could have disappeared so suddenly.

"Taken their guns with 'em, too," said the widow, as she came down from an inspection of their room. "Where can they have gone?"

"It's a sort of half-holiday at the academy," said Almira. "They never played hookey before."

"Don't care if they did. What beats me is that they didn't say a word about it beforehand."

"It's that Sol Rogers. He's up to any kind of mischief."

"Is he? Well, perhaps he is, but Van Rivington is even with him, any day. So's Pat. Anyhow, we'll know more about it when they get home."

That sounded reasonable, and, meantime, the three friends were being whirled away toward the Gap in a big lumber wagon, containing, besides themselves, Denis Mullaly, Murray, and two stalwart fellows whom Van set down for constables. With the three detectives who were said to be coming over the mountain, there was sure to be force enough, as Sol said, to arrest two men.

"And the dogs," said Pat.

"Yes," said Sol; "I'd forgot about the dogs."

The horses and wagon were left in the woods-road, half a mile below the cabin, and the whole party pushed forward on foot.

The boys were to set out at daylight," said Murray, "and show in the clearing at ten o'clock precisely. If nothing's gone wrong they'll keep time to a fraction of a minute."

Very peaceful that rude bit of clearing looked, as the intruders reached the edge of the woods. It was a quarter before ten o'clock, and they would not, therefore, have any long time to wait. The blue smoke was curling from the mud-chimney of the cabin. The horses were there, and were trying to pick a breakfast from the thin grass on the mountain side. So was the cow. The two hounds had been reposing lazily on the doorstep, but now, as if they scented the approach of danger, were beginning to stretch themselves, and take turns in uttering deep notes of canine warning.

In answer to the baying of the dogs, one of the squatters shortly came to the door and looked sharply around, but he saw no one, and had probably left the dogs out in the clearing for many many times before that, for he aimed an impatient sort of a kick at the nearest hound, and went in again.

Just then Murray put his watch back into his pocket with a shining click, remarking:

"Ten o'clock. Forward!"

Forward it was, and, almost at the same instant, three men sprang out of the woods on the opposite side of the clearing.

"They're on time," said Murray. "But what a racket those dogs are making now!"

They were, indeed, but he and his men, both parties, were within a hundred yards of the door of the cabin before it again swung open.

They could hear the squatter who opened it exclaim:

"Guns and pistols, Bill. We're cornered this time."

And the second squatter came to the door with a rifle in his hand, only to say, with an oath, as he looked out upon his rapidly advancing enemies:

"No use. Too many of 'em. It's too late. There's them three boys with 'em. We're done for."

The odds were indeed a little too heavy, and anything like running away was as much out of the question as resistance.

Neither was any time given them for the destruction of dangerous material in the cabin, for Murray and his men were charging in at the double quick.

Besides, the two squatters were not bloodthirsty desperadoes of the Robert Kyd stamp, but mere commonplace rascals, such as almost all criminals really are, who preferred counterfeiting and loafing to any kind of hard work, but who had no stomach for a fight with three or four times their own number, in broad daylight.

So, in a minute or so more the detectives and constables, followed by Van and Sol and Pat, were safely inside the cabin, and the two squatters had handcuffs on their wrists. There was no sort of doubt of their guilt, for they had actually been surprised at their work, and a crucible of melted metal was simmering on the fire, while the floor was strewn with plaster-of-paris molds and other tools of their miserable, counterfeiting trade. A further search revealed quite a quantity of base coin, halves and quarters, ready-made up for transportation through the Gap.

"It wasn't a bad idea of theirs," said Murray, "to make that stuff out here among the hills. They've been at it a good while, and they looked out a deal better than they could have done in the city. The whole gang's broken up now. Let's make a clean sweep."

"I say, Van," said Sol, "if there isn't another buck."

There he was, indeed, and a fine, fat one, hung up by the heels against the side of the cabin.

"Fair plunder," remarked Murray; "but we can't do anything with him. You and the two Bunkerville constables divide him. Split him lengthwise right in the middle. We owe you boys that much, I guess."

They did, indeed, for they were winning pretty handsome rewards by their capture, and the two constables were quite satisfied with the manner of the division.

The two horses of the counterfeiters were quickly hitched up and their wagon loaded with their rude effects. One of the constables said he would come back after the cow.

Then the officers and their captives, with the boys, got into the lumber-wagon which had brought them, and Murray ordered a return to Bunkerville.

"It's proud I am of yez," said Denis Mullaly to Pat. "This all comes of their tryin' to make a fool of an Irish boy."

Pat could not see very clearly, for his own part, what he had done to distinguish himself, but he was glad the whole thing was over.

Great was the astonishment of Mrs. Porrance and Almira, about one o'clock that day, when a wagon stopped before their door and out of it got, not only their three boarders, but the half of an exceedingly prosperous-looking deer, horns and all. Van had given up the skin again to keep the horns.

"Boys," exclaimed the widow, "have you been hunting?"

"Not exactly," said Van; "but this is our deer. We must take that leg with us on to the deacon's."

"He don't need anything for his Thanksgiving."

"You don't know, Mrs. Porrance," said Sol. "What's more, we've a big story to tell him, and he won't believe half of it unless we bring him some venison."

"You're the queerest lot of boys I ever saw. Come along with in into the kitchen. I s'pose I'll have to let you have your own way."

"Oh, Mr. Rivington," exclaimed Almira, "please do tell me the story. Is it very romantic?"

(To be continued.)

"Three Boys" was commenced in No. 666.

COMMON ERRORS OF SPEECH.

SOME OF THE MOST GLARING POINTED OUT AND CORRECTIONS GIVEN—A FEW EXPRESSIONS FOR THE CARELESS TO PONDER.

A GRAMMARIAN correspondent, writing to the press, remarks that very few persons—fewer, indeed, than is generally supposed—speak and write our language correctly, and expresses the belief that every one gives too little attention to the proper use of words—their exact meaning, orthography and pronunciation. We should not be satisfied with our ability to speak and write "well enough for all practical purposes." He also suggests that much progress may be made in acquiring a knowledge of words by a careful study of the introduction to Webster's dictionary—the unabridged edition. It gives information as to the philosophy of our language, which cannot fail to interest the reader.

The writer picks out a number of examples of words most frequently applied wrongly, and sets them forth thus: "It is the exception rather than the rule when *shall* and *will*, *should* and *would* are used correctly, especially in conversation.

The Frenchman who fell overboard from a vessel gave us a sort of legacy, a pointed illustration of the misuse of shall and will. He lustily cried out: "I will be drowned, and nobody shall help me." The spectators, with a proper regard for his expressed intention, and feeling, doubtless, that the result would be simply retributive justice for his murdering the "king's English," kindly held off and permitted him—to be drowned.

Should primarily denotes obligation, and *will* purpose of inclination, the futurity of the action being naturally inferred. These verbs are now used only as auxiliaries, but they still retain to a great extent their primary signification. The following examples will show their proper use: "I will write now." "You shall write now." "He intends that I shall write."

With reference to the future time we should say: "I shall go to-morrow." "He will go to-morrow." And in asking questions: "Shall I sing?" "Will you sing?" "Shall you be at home to-morrow?" "Will he arrive in time?"

Shall is used instead of will after certain conjunctions—if, provided, though, unless, etc., and adverbs when, before, after, until, while, etc. Should is used in the past tense in place of shall and would in place of will. "He intended that I or you should write—he (himself) would write." "I should be glad to see you to-morrow."

A very common error is found in the expression, "I am opposed to those sort of things," making the pronoun agree with "things" in the plural instead of "sort" in the singular number. The most careless reader will say it should be "that sort of things," but if he give the matter some attention he will find that even careful speakers frequently make the mistake. Another common error is in the use of like for as and as if. We hear, "You read like George speaks," for "You read as George speaks." "He spoke like he meant what he said," for, "He spoke as if he meant what he said." Without is often erroneously used for unless: "I cannot do it without you help me," should be, "I cannot do it unless you help me." Not long since I heard a man, who had the appearance of one who should know better say to a friend, "There is no use in me going." He evidently intended to say there was no use in the "going," but what he really said was equivalent to: "There is no use in me while I am going." He should have used the possessive pronoun my instead of the objective me, and his sentence would have been, "There is no use in my going." This mistake if often made, not only colloquially, but in print, as per example: A daily paper said some days ago, "In the event of Colonel Black resigning," etc., when it should have said, using the possessive case: "In the event of Colonel Black's resigning," etc.

Probably one of the most common and unpardonable errors is in the use of who for whom in certain forms of speech. It is sadly universality in conversation by those who are well educated, as well as by those who are not, and reputable journals are not free from the fault. For example: "Who did you see?" "Who did you want?" "It was the man, who, of all others, we desired to see." Of course the sentences should be: "Whom did you see?" "Whom did you want?" "It was the man whom, of all others, we desired to see." This error is one of the best illustrations of that carelessness of speech to which I have referred—a carelessness which, when indulged by educated persons, leaves its impress upon the minds of those who are not educated with results which cannot be otherwise than injurious. Another, not so common, but which needs correction, is in such expressions as "She looked beautifully." This sentence, properly spoken, is objective, not subjective, and the idea to be conveyed is that her appearance was beautiful, but the words made to say that she looked, i. e., saw beautifully," thus completely changing the sense. The error consists in the use of the adverb for the adjective. The correct expression would be, "she looked beautiful."

We sometimes hear the word *fly* used, even by persons of culture, as in the sentence, "The house

was illy constructed." It should be, "The house was ill constructed." There is no such word in the language as illy. It is an adverb, but as it has not the usual adverbial form, careless speakers and writers glide into illy.

The following are very common errors: "I should have been too glad to have met you." "Will you learn me to dance?" instead of, "Will you teach me to dance?" "This much by way of apology," instead of "Thus much," etc. "I have looked everywhere," instead of "I have looked everywhere." "There are no news," instead of "There is no news." "These molasses," instead of "This molasses." "A preventative of disease," instead of "preventive of disease." "A little of that will go a great ways," instead of "A great way," etc.

ORVILLE AND DAN;

Or,

Adventures in Japan.

By COMMODORE AH-LOOK,

Author of "KEEP YOUR BOUNDS," "INVENTIVE BEN," etc.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE BURNING OF A JAPANESE CITY.

"HURRY up! Hurry up!" cried Dan, shaking his sleeping companions. "*Cudjoe! Cudjoe!*" (Fire! Fire!)

This brought Orv and Ben to their feet, and after dressing themselves and securing their baggage the party made the best of their way into the street, where rich and poor, men, women and children, were hurrying in one direction—away from the flames.

The trio joined the terror-stricken mass, and were forced onward until they arrived at the gates, and after a struggle, presently found themselves outside the walls and among the paddy (rice) fields, through the soft mud of which they were compelled to wade until they reached a range of hills, distant two miles from the city.

Here they halted, amid the undergrowth, and looked down upon Fukushima, which seemed to be enveloped in a network of fire; the blazing lacquer (varnish) from the warehouses descending the sloping streets and igniting everything in its way.

"My gracious!" exclaimed Orv, "what a terrible sight! Hear the poor wretches crying and screaming in their endeavors to get out."

"Those sounds are uttered by the firemen," answered Benkei; "the people are too much frightened to make a noise."

As he was speaking the boys noticed some persons standing upon the city walls waving enormous fans, as though signaling, the blaze behind them throwing up their forms in relief, and making their actions very conspicuous.

"Are those fellows showing the people how to escape?" asked Dan.

"No," chuckled Benkie; "they are fire-charmers, ordering the flames to go back. Of course it's all rubbish; the fire will eat up the city, and there will be an end of it."

"Then why do they do such a ridiculous thing?" demanded Orv.

"Oh, I am sure I don't know," said Ben; "it's a custom of our country. When a fire breaks out certain officers, who are paid for it, assemble on the roof of a building, prostrate themselves to the east and west, wave their official fans backward and forward, and shout in a supplicating voice, 'Dragon, I beseech thee to go back!' If the conflagration does not extend the people put it down to the power of the charmers; if, on the contrary, it makes a big havoc, they accuse the officials, and sometimes put them in prison. I think your Western idea is the best: you have wide streets, big fire-engines, and hook-and-ladder companies."

"And big fires, too," murmured Dan. "Did you never hear about those of Chicago and Boston?"

"Yes, I read about them in *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Weekly*," replied Benkei; "but they were a trifle to the one in Kioto, which destroyed twenty-seven thousand four hundred houses, eighteen palaces, seven hundred mansions, one hundred and seventy-five temples, forty bridges and fifty thousand huts, and rendered over three hundred thousand people homeless."

"Go to the top of the class," said Dan, imitating a teacher's voice. "I am glad to say that neither Boston nor Chicago contained imperial palaces, nor came up to your standard of a big fire."

They watched the burning until the flames drove the charmers off the walls, and made a clean sweep of everything inside, after which the boys nestled down among the bamboo undergrowth and slumbered.

At daybreak Orville and Benkei left Dan in charge of the baggage, and went back to the city to find their old bearers or engage new ones.

Everything was in a state of confusion, spite of which some of the citizens were already clearing the ground and preparing to rebuild their habitations, while here and there were pieces of wood bearing inscriptions as follows:

"Ima Hotta—fine rice. Business will be resumed at this old stand to-night." "Tei-ami Honi—elegant teas—will open his shop at (this) midday."

"That's regular American style," said Orville.

"Bet you those fellows were well insured."

"Not a cash," was the response. "Such a thing is unknown in this country. We have neither insurance offices, hospitals nor lawyers in Japan."

"You are wise about the last," said Orv; "but what do you do when folks are sick?"

"If they are nobles, samurai, shopkeepers or laborers, their friends take care of them; if outcasts, such as actors, carriers, butchers or gravediggers, and poor as that, or beggars, they may live or die, as it pleases them. Nobody worries. I wish they did. However, they say the Emperor is altering these things, and building fine hospitals in various cities."

They spent several hours in endeavoring to discover the site of their inn, and Benkei was more than once ordered by the authorities to help clear the streets, or clear out; so they reluctantly gave up their search and returned to Dan, with whom, to their pleasure, they found the bearers.

"Why, we have been looking for you everywhere," said Orv, addressing the men. "How did you come to track us?"

The elder of the two rolled his eyes and significantly replied:

"We could tell you a mile off by your flag," adding: "We can always find any one who owes us money."

"Some of my countrymen would doubt your assertion," observed Dan.

"Possibly," said the other; "but you are not Japanese. We have a saying, 'A creditor will stick to a man long after all his friends have deserted him.' If you had not been in our debt we might have given up our hunt and sought employment in the city."

After they had partaken of rice and tea, Orville unfurled his flag and gave the word to march, remarking as they did so:

"Now to pay a visit to Mr. Yamo."

Their route that day lay through a romantic country, and they saw numerous groups of lacquer-trees, the trunks of which were scarred like sugar-maples.

"What a peculiar smell they give out!" exclaimed Dan. "Let us stop and examine them."

"No; come on," urged his brother. "Ben can't tell us anything about the process; we had better wait until we arrive at Mr. Yamo's."

About five o'clock they reached a village, where they learned that the lacquer man's farm was several miles to the east. This determined them to halt and rest.

Entering the principal inn, they enjoyed hot baths and a good meal of fried fish, eggs, rice and vegetables, then squatted in the verands and watched the passers-by; themselves being objects of curiosity to the natives.

"Would you like to see some top-spinning?" inquired their landlady. "We have a celebrated troop of performers staying here for the night."

"Top-spinning?" said Orville. "Anybody can spin a top. I consider myself a boss hand at it."

"I think my countrymen can beat you," remarked Benkei.

"Let the men show a specimen of their ability," said Dan to the landlady.

The woman nodded pleasantly and retired, while Benkei, puffing away at his pipe, watched his mouth and rolled his eyes, as much as to say:

"Don't be too sure, my young friends. You are going to be astonished."

The road in front of the inn was ankle-deep in a sort of black mud, and by desiderated the noses of footsteps, and the boys had not heard the villagers, who now swarmed in front of the place.

"We shall have a good audience," said Orv, while they were awaiting the appearance of the top-spinners. "Why do some of your countrymen shave their foreheads and top of their heads, and wear that gun-hammer cue, a few allow all their hair to grow and tie it up in a bunch on top, and others wear it as we do?"

"For political reasons," grinned Ben. "The fellows who file little tails on their heads are Buddhists, and hate foreigners; those who do not shave and who tie up their hair in a sheaf are Shintos—Emperor's men—and the gentlemen who wear their hair like ourselves are liberals—New Japan men—who are endeavoring to civilize our countrymen according to foreign ideas. You can always tell what a person is by looking at his head."

When Benkei said "like ourselves," Orville and Dan winked at one another, their friend's head very much resembling a cocoanut on a half-worn store-brush. However, they said nothing, as they were not desirous of discouraging his attempt at American civilization.

The trio chatted a while and watched the silent assembly, the keen-eyed there with the greatest curiosity, and whispered their opinions to one another until the top-spinners appeared, when they cleared a space for the entertainment.

There were four of the artists, each of whom had two attendants who kept the ground, handed their employers various articles, and, from time to time, uttered loud yells, meant for marks of approval, although they sounded as if the utterers had just experienced a sharp twinge of colic.

As soon as the villagers had squatted in a wide semi-circle, the top-spinners bowed with their hands and knees and bowed their foreheads, Benkei whispering:

"We must throw them some money, or they won't begin to perform for a week."

CHAPTER XXVII.

JAPANESE TOP-SPINNERS.

EACH of the travelers tossed a string of cash into the cleared space, and the landlady and her attendants who were with them in the veranda, showered coins. After which encouragement the performers rose, spread out a mat, and proceeded with their wonderful entertainment.

The artists began by exhibiting their empty hands; then, with a rapid motion, produced tops, spinning at full speed from their sleeves, and commenced their juggling.

They balanced them upon the points of their fingers, after which they caused the spinning tops to run up their right arms, across their necks, and down their sleeves into their left hands; and that done, made them traverse cords, and, finally, one after the other, spin up an *almost* thread extending from the ground to the roof of the inn, where they remained spinning during the entire performance.

The spectators threw in their cash, and the boys added a further reward; meanwhile the attendants pelted and screamed as though they had gone crazy, and the top-spinners fanned themselves, as much as to say:

"What do you think of that?"

As soon as silence was restored one of the attendants placed a long cane upon the ground, and, giving vent to demoniacal cries, retreated, when the head spinner, with a circular motion of his sleeved right arm, deposited a top upon the table, and drawing a long sword from his mouth, dealt his spinning toy a blow and split it into a dozen little ones, which went on humming as merrily as the parent.

Gathering these, still moving, in his hands, he advanced to where the boys were sitting, and by a dexterous turn of his hands, sent them spinning in a circle, or in and out, like people dancing; then, leaving them going at full speed, retired to one side, while his companions proceeded to perform the next trick.

The first of them seized the ends of a strong silken line, while the third, raising an enormous top, placed it upon the cord and started it by a quick motion of his hand, its speed gradually increasing until the figures painted upon its side merged into colored lines.

By tightening or slackening the tension, the enormous toy was alternately tossed high into the air and caught upon the cord, finally exploding and revealing a comical head, evidently intended to caricature the typical foreigner, the wonderful part of it being, while the lower shell of the top continued to rapidly revolve, the papier-maché head remained still for several seconds, then gradually assumed the shape of a beer-bottle, conspicuously decorated with an English label.

Orville and Dan joined in the tumultuous applause that followed this wonderful exhibition and rewarded the men most liberally, the rest of the audience contributing their share.

While the men were preparing for the next trick Benkei whispered to his friends:

"That figure was not meant to represent you."

"We understand," chuckled Dan. "I took it for an Englishman who had drunk so much beer that his head had gradually resolved itself into a bottle of his favorite beverage."

"Well, yes and no," said Benkei. "It was really a Japanese pun—the word for a big top and a man who drinks too much and has a swollen, empty head, are the same, only the performers, desirous of being polite, used an Englishman's head and a beer-bottle instead of a Japanese and a sake jug."

"We comprehend," said Orville; "it was a delicate compliment to us. I suppose when they do this trick before Englishmen, they treat them to an American's head and a whisky-bottle? We are aware of your national urbanity."

Upon hearing this Benkei's mouth twitched comically, and he remarked to the brothers:

"Now they are going to do the most wonderful performance of all."

A section of a tree, like a chopping-block, was rolled into the open space and fifty of the shaven-headed among the crowd squatted about it, with their foreheads elevated, then the chief of the troupe, producing a big top, the size of a peck measure, wound a cord about its peg, and tossing it high into the air, dropped it on to the block, where it spun with terrific velocity.

"My lords, will you come here?" Benkei cried to Orville and Dan.

The boys rose and advanced to him, whereupon he placed them due north and south by a compass, and bade them extend their hands, one reaching over the men's heads, tapped the apex of the top with his fan, causing a number of the toys to rise from it, in a conical pile, all of them whirling away as merrily as the bottom one.

While the brothers were looking at this extraordinary sight, the lower top burst asunder, scattering the upper ones in all directions, landing one in each of the boys' hands and others upon the upturned foreheads of the supernumeraries, leaving upon the block a beautiful model in paper of Mount Fuji, the sacred mountain of Japan.

"I want to know," ejaculated Dan, as he endeavored to close his fingers upon the spinning toys. "This beats all—don't it, Orv?"

"Yes," answered his brother, returning the tops to the exhibitors, and giving them a parting present. "These Japs have bigger fires than we do, and their average at this business is a hundred, while ours is away down," adding to Benkei, who had joined them: "You were right, my friend, and can go at the head of the class again. I thought we American boys could beat creation at almost everything, but you *top* us at this."

"Oh, I knew it," said Benkei. "There are only two wonderful nations in the world—America and Japan. As far as outsiders are concerned, I don't count them, though I wish somebody would chastise our landlady's husband. Would you believe it, there are no cardinal points marked up in our chamber. Come, and I'll show you."

The boys followed him indoors, where they found the lady of the house scolding a hen-pecked looking person, who, on seeing the guests, said in a bewildered fashion:

"Upon my conscience, I am not to blame. We bought this house just as it is, and no one has complained of the rooms."

"Come here," angrily commanded Benkei, stepping into their sleeping appartment. "How are we to tell in which direction to lie? We shall all be dead before the morning."

"Where are you from?" inquired the landlady, glancing over her husband's shoulder. "Surely you know where the sun rises? Nowadays nobody but Ainos want the points of the compass marked on their ceiling. You must be from Yezo."

This speech made Benkei crazy, it being equal to our calling a person a greenhorn or half Indian.

"You needn't laugh," he said to the boys, after he had angrily ordered their host and hostess from the room; "no one Japanese will sleep with his head to the north."

"Why not?" demanded Orville.

"Because he does not wish to have his life-current twisted up," snapped Ben, throwing himself upon his mat. "Our dead are always laid out with their heads to the north and their feet to the south. Have you not seen how particular I have been to sleep with my head east by west? I should have died long ago if I hadn't. You Americans have yet many things to learn, and cannot be too cautious about your life-current."

"Good land!" exclaimed Dan, with the utmost gravity. "I wonder Orv and I have lived so long. We'll be more careful in future. I am glad our kind friend, Captain O'Reilley, thought of providing us with a compass. Where is it, brother?"

Orville produced the article, and they proceeded to amuse themselves with Benkei, who closed his eyes and pretended to slumber.

"A little more to the east, brother," said Dan, giving Ben's head a push. "Starbo'rd your helm a point!"

"You are wrong," said Orv, jerking him back; "I tell you we ain't going to fool with this matter; if Ben's current of life gets twisted it will be awful. Shove him over this way, Dan—he's a point off his course. Steady!"

They kept on in this style until Benkei lost patience, and, rising, crossed over to the other side of the apartment, where he curled himself up and went to sleep.

When he awoke in the morning he said to his friends:

"Now my brain is clear; I lay in the right direction all night. You may laugh; I wouldn't sleep with my head to the north for a thousand dollars!"

Orville did not laugh, but, consulting the pocket compass, placed it on the floor beside Ben, and, pointing to it, showed him that he had been lying due north and south.

For a moment the good-tempered fellow appeared alarmed; then, as quickly resumed his usual merry way, and, winking at Dan, observed:

"You Americans seem quite right this time. It doesn't matter which way one sleeps; you can go to the head of the class."

While they were dressing, a small boy opened the door of their room and shouted:

"*O-mama!*" (cold boiled rice).

"Here, your *mother* isn't in this apartment," cried Orv. "You had better go to the ladies' side of the house."

"*O-mama!*" once more ejaculated the lad, tapping the door-post with a tiny wooden bailer. "*O-mama, Sama!*"

"Didn't my brother tell you that your *mama* isn't here?" snapped Dan. "What are you howling about?"

The boy opened his eyes to their fullest extent and repeated the question, then went off bawling it down the corridors, while Benkei, who was smoking and grinning, quietly remarked:

"He doesn't want his mother; he merely wished to know if you noblemen required some cold boiled rice to settle your stomachs for the day," adding, "I guess Japan can go to the head of the class again."

"Yes," chuckled Orv; "if it is correct to break your fast with cold boiled rice, you can. I'd just as soon swallow a lot of small pebbles."

Within an hour they had breakfasted, and were on their way to Mr. Yamo's farm, while the landlady and her attendants shouted after them:

Saionara!" (farewell).

CHAPTER XVIII.

ORVILLE, DAN AND BENKEI COMPARE POETRY.

THE morning was bright, the rice and tea in the fields were green and beautiful, and in the distance glittered the snow-covered peak of Iwa, lighted up by the rising sun.

First marched Orville, bearing the Stars and Stripes proudly fluttering in the breeze, then came Dan, and behind him Benkei, while in the rear trudged the bearers with the baggage, which hung from poles carried across their shoulders.

"My gracious, what a lot of crows!" exclaimed Orville, pointing to some mulberry-trees, the branches of which were black with the birds. "School They ain't a bit afraid. In America they are awfully scared at a man, and people shoot them because they damage the crops. They are useless creatures, anyhow."

"Hush," said Benkei; "don't say such a shocking thing. The ladies of this country regard the crow as an emblem of love; besides which we consider them sacred, because they showed the army of Jimmu Tenno (the first Mikado) the way into the Province of Yamato."

"How many years ago was that?" inquired Dan.

"Over twenty-five hundred," was Ben's answer. "We pet the *Karasu* (crow) just as you do the robin redbreast, and repeat poems about them."

"I can do that," said Orv, winking at his brother and burlesquing the "Lines to a Robin":

"Pretty little Ka-ra-su,
Hopping through the snow,
Merry little Ka-ra-su,
Cawing as you go;
Cawing on the housetop,
Cawing on the tree,
Pretty little Ka-ra-su,
Caw, you pet, for me!"

"Beautiful!" ejaculated Benkei. "Ah! I have heard you are a nation of poets. I admire you more than ever. One of our great authors wrote a poem about the Ka-ra-su; it contains seven hundred stanzas. Would you like me to recite it?"

"Not now, thank you!" smilingly replied Orv. "We will take the first wet day for its enjoyment. By-the-way, don't imagine I composed the lines I have just repeated."

"Who did, then?" said Benkei, producing his memorandum-paper. "I would like to learn the poet's name."

"Longfellow, wasn't it, brother?" said Orv, winking at Dan.

"I don't know," was the answer. "He is the biggest poet in the world."

"Longfellow!" murmured Benkei, as he wrote the word; "why is he thus called? Is he a giant?"

"Yes, you may put him down as such," nodded Orv.

"How tall is he?" innocently inquired Ben. "I am going to write a book upon your country, and would like to give a description of your chief poet. Is he a very long fellow?"

"I won't fool you," laughingly answered Orville. "His name is only a name, and of itself means nothing; but he is a great man, and the most celebrated poet in the world."

"Is he greater than Yamato-Dake, who lived over seventeen hundred years ago, and invented the distich, or thirty-one syllable poem?" asked Benkei. "He was the foremost poet of Japan."

"Oh, much greater," said Dan, joining in the conversation. "Longfellow's works are known all over the globe, and have been translated into many languages, while, until you mentioned it, we had never heard of your old Yamato-Dake."

"Or I of your young Longfellow!" was Benkei's proud response. "Our poet was celebrated before your country was thought of. The man who sneers at Yamato-Dake cannot be my friend. Listen to his description of a sunrise," with which he struck an attitude and solemnly repeated:

"From Eastern bed of water,
Rises the glorious
Heaven-illuminating goddess,
Ama-terasu o mikami,
Who mounting the pillar of the skies——"

"Yes, we understand," said Dan, "but how many stanzas are there in that little effusion? We can't stay here all day to listen; we are due at Mr. Yamo's."

Benkei informed him there were several hundred verses, and taking the hint, said:

"I will repeat them some evening before we go to bed."

"Good enough," said Orv. "What are those fellows ahead of us? They don't seem to be burdened with clothes."

"Stand aside!" cried Benkei. "They are the Mikado's expressmen."

The words had scarcely passed his lips when two nude figures, bearing small parcels, dashed past them, and in a few moments were out of sight.

"Ben," said Orville, as they resumed their march, "we have expressmen in America, but they don't carry on their business in the same style as yours do or wear such a light costume. It beats that of our baseball club at Ilurt, does it not?"

Benkei assented to this, and as they walked on, treated them to a number of Japanese songs, some of which were vastly amusing.

"Yours is a very easy language to acquire," said Dan, when they halted to rest under a clump of mulberry-trees.

"Oh, yes," was the merry response, "though it takes some people a long while to learn that *O-mama* means cold boiled rice."

"There," was Dan's answer; "talk enough! You shall have the first prize for foreign languages. Go to the head of the class."

"The head must be to the east, then," chuckled Benkei, filling his pipe. "Hush, here comes a Ronin."

He pointed to the narrow pathway, along which a man was walking, whose features were entirely covered by a tall, conical hat made of grass.

"Shall I knock him on the head with this?" said Orv, grasping the flagpole.

"No," cautiously answered Benkei, "don't take any notice of him; he is not armed," and after the man had passed, he continued: "A Ronin is a person who has done something to make himself an outlaw, such as a thief or a disorderly or undutiful son."

"I thought they were haters of foreigners," remarked Orville. "You called that fellow who assaulted Dan a Ronin."

"So he was," replied Benkei. "We have two names for people who attack foreigners, the *Jo-ri* (patriots) and *Rowins* (rowdies). One cuts you down because he thinks your presence pollutes his country and the other from sheer cussedness. Do not be afraid, both of these classes are now very scarce, the Emperor having issued an edict threatening death to any who molest strangers."

"I'll vote for him every time," said Orville. "Here comes some workingmen; let us ask them the way to Yamo's place."

As the laborers marched up in Indian file, the boys noticed that their only garment was a sort of rush mat, tied loosely about the waist, with the points hanging downward.

"My friend," said Orville to the leader, "we wish to see the lacquer-grower, Yamo."

"I am the man," mumbled the old fellow, bowing. "What can I do for you, T-jin Sama?" (*My lord foreigner.*)

ORVILLE AND DAN.—"AS HE WAS SPEAKING THE BOYS NOTICED SOME PERSONS STANDING UPON THE CITY WALLS WAVING ENORMOUS FANS, AS THOUGH SIGNALING, THE BLAZE BEHIND THEM THROWING UP THEIR FORMS IN RELIEF, AND MAKING THEIR ACTIONS VERY CONSPICUOUS."—SEE PAGE 295.

The boy produced Seisuke's letter, and the newcomer, squatting before them, opened and read it, then remarked:

"I am very much honored by having such distinguished visitors. You desire to learn how the lacquer-varnish of our country is made. Come with me and I will show you."

Yamo led the way to a long line of lacquer-trees, upon which his men had already begun operations.

Taking a sharp knife he made an incision in the bark, just deep enough to reach the wood, and extending about a quarter of the trunk's circumference, then repeated the motion on the next.

"This is the first process," said Yamo; "my men will now go to every tree on my farm, and to-morrow morning, when you have rested yourselves, I will explain the whole process. Come to my house and accept my hospitality. The fresh exhalation given out by the lacquer-tree is considered poisonous, and may affect you."

After walking a little distance they arrived at a cluster of small houses, and were shown into the largest, Yamo's, and introduced to his wife, a round-faced, good-humored woman, whose teeth, like those of all Japanese matrons, were dyed as black as ebony.

She was nursing a white cat, and when she had saluted the boys, her husband inquired their age, and taking the animal in his arms, asked them if it were not very handsome.

"Where's his tail?" asked Orville, who had closely examined the creature.

"His what?" grinned the old man.

"His what?" echoed the old woman, as though she thought they were joking.

The lad repeated the question to the laughing pair, and to his astonishment was informed that Japanese cats were tailless.

"You're fooling, are you not?" said Dan.

"Oh, no," merrily replied the lady; "they sometimes have a short scut, but nothing to speak of. Until you mentioned it I never dreamed of such a thing."

"Then all I can say," remarked Orv, in a musing tone, "is, that nature has been confoundedly mean to them. Japan is a wonderful place. Are your monkeys as badly off as your cats?"

"I don't know," she snapped, as though greatly offended. "I never kept one of those human animals; we do not consider it lucky to do so."

Finding their conversation was not relished, the boys asked if they could have a bath, and were presently shown into a room containing a big tub of hot water, such as is found in the poorest Japanese dwelling.

"Why did she object to my speaking about monkeys?" whispered Dan to Benkei, as they enjoyed the steaming luxury.

Ben's mouth twitched comically, and he cautiously answered:

"Schish, she may be listening. Some Buddhists believe that scolding women are, at their death, changed into apes. It's evidently a tender subject with Mrs. Yamo."

At sunrise the next morning their host aroused them, saying:

"Come, my friends, rice is ready; after you have eaten I will show you how we prepare the *Ki-no Urushi*." (Crude Japanese lacquer.)

CHAPTER XXIX.

HOW JAPANESE LACQUER IS PRODUCED.

ORVILLE and Dan were anxious to thoroughly investigate everything connected with the growth of the lacquer-tree, and as they partook of their first meal, plied their host with questions.

"The trees must be five years old before they are tapped," said Yamo; "and if we want to get vegetable-wax from their berries, we limit the number of incisions."

"What?" inquired Dan. "Do you get wax from a tree?"

"Yes," answered the old man, pausing in the process of shoveling down the rice. "The lacquer-tree is most valuable, the trunk yielding varnish and the berries wax; only you can't get a large quantity of each article from one plant. Up in the north here we produce both, while down south they grow the trees solely for their lacquer, making their candles from the produce of the Loo-choo, wild wax-tree."

"Have you no bees?" said Orville.

"Yes, in some parts," replied Yamo, "but they could not produce wax enough to make lights for thirty-three millions of people. When your kerosene lamps are cheaper and we can refine our earth-oil, we shall give up using candles and grow more lacquer."

"One moment," said his wife. "These gentlemen must not be poisoned with your horrid varnish. Here is a good preventive against its effects," with which she gave each of the travelers a small bunch of garlic, remarking, "It is not only an antidote for what I have stated, but an excellent thing to keep away demons and malignant spirits."

The brothers chewed a few of the cloves, more out of compliment than with any belief in their efficacy, though nothing would induce Benkei to follow their example.

"You had better eat some," said Orville. "I know the perfume is horrible, but anything is better than being poisoned."

"Oh, I couldn't!" said Benkei. "We Buddhists are forbidden to partake of the five foul-smelling plants, chief among which is garlic."

"We must shave your head again, Ben," chuckled Dan. "I see how it is; you are an excellent Christian when seated before a roast-turkey and fixings—when it comes to onions and such, you go back to your old faith. I must say I partly agree with you, and understand how it is evil spirits won't trouble those who eat the plants you despise."

"I'm beginning to abhor myself," said Orv, as he worried down the last morsel. "I suppose this, like vaccination, will save us from something worse."

"Come!" exclaimed Yamo, leading the way into the open air, "it is time for us to join the men who are collecting the lacquer."

When they reached the plantation they found a number of laborers, each of whom was provided with a bucket and an iron spatula.

Proceeding from tree to tree, the men carefully scraped off the sap, and a white, milky substance that during the night had oozed out of the incisions, this process giving off an acrid odor which caused the boys to sneeze, and the operators to snuffle as though they had a catarrh.

"It makes your eyes water, don't it?" inquired their guide. "I suppose, now you have seen this operation, you have no desire to remain here?"

"No—a-tish-oo—I thank you," said Orv; "a little of this—a-tish-oo—goes a great way."

They returned toward the dwelling and entered a long shed, on the floor of which were small wooden tubs, filled with the raw produce, a viscous liquid of a dirty-gray color, covered with a dark-brown skin.

"These vessels," said Yamo, "are lined with paper, in order to prevent anything coming out of the wood and spoiling the lacquer, which remains here for several days, until it settles, the thin, or best quality rising to the top, and the thick, containing particles of bark leaves and dirt, going to the bottom."

"Is it then fit for use?" asked Dan.

Yamo beckoned them to follow him into another department, in which they saw workmen straining the thin lacquer through cotton cloths into shallow tubs. These the operators carefully lifted and conveyed into the open air, where the stuff was stirred with iron spoons, until a certain excess of water had evaporated from it, and its color had changed from gray to dark-brown, or nearly black.

"This," he said, "is what we call *Roiro-urushi* (finest black lacquer). My men stir this for several days, and toward the last add to it a small quantity of water, impregnated with iron-rust or a gall-nut infusion, darkened with a preparation of iron. They keep the mass moving until the water has passed off, when the lacquer is bottled and ready for the artists, who use it upon wooden-ware."

"Can they varnish with it just as it is?" inquired Orville.

"No," said their informant; "they strain it very carefully through a peculiar, long-fibred paper, which takes out even the smallest particles of dust, and sometimes charge it with vermilion or gold powder, but this first-class lacquer is generally used for jet-black work."

"What do you do with the thick stuff?" said Dan.

"We strain it through cloths and treat it very much as we do the thin," was the response. "It is used for common ware. When the trees get old we cut them down and make a lacquer from the branches, which we soak in water and score in spiral lines. This is very hard, and is called *Seshime* (priming). We have a fourth kind, composed of the thin lacquer and *Yeno-shiwra* (drying-oil). This is used in the same manner as foreign shellac for furniture. Now you have the whole process, as far as I can tell you."

"How much do you receive per bottle for your varnish?" asked Orville.

"We sell it by weight," said the old fellow. "A *kwamme*" (8¼ lbs.) "is worth about four yen" (dollars).

"Your *kwamme* about equals our gallon," remarked Orville. "How many measures of lacquer do you produce in a year?"

"About ten of each," said Yamo.

"I don't think it would pay us to take the plants home," observed Dan.

"You are quite right," nodded Yamo. "By the time I have paid my laborers and taxes, the money I receive for the lacquer is all gone."

"How do you and your family live, then?" inquired Dan.

Yamo puffed at his pipe and answered:

"I make some wax, silk and gut, and grow rice, wheat, cotton, rape-seed, tea and vegetables enough for our wants;" then, raising his finger in order to attract their attention, added: "Listen."

The party did as he commanded and presently heard a roaring noise in the direction of the mountains, and saw the forest trees bend to and fro like ripe wheat in a storm.

"What is it?" demanded Orville. "Is it an earthquake?"

Yamo seized a pair of wooden clappers, and after shaking them vigorously, to alarm his workmen, excitedly replied:

"*Tai-fu! Tai-fu!*" then hurried his guest indoors.

THREE BOYS.—"IN A MINUTE OR SO MORE THE DETECTIVES AND CONSTABLES, FOLLOWED BY VAN AND SOL AND PAT, WERE SAFELY INSIDE THE CABIN."—SEE PAGE 295.

CHAPTER XXX.

A JAPANESE TORNADO.

THE travelers followed Yamo into his dwelling, where they were soon joined by the workmen, who came rushing in from the fields and out-buildings.

The *Tai-fu* is a hurricane peculiar to Japan, its visitations being sometimes accompanied by an earthquake, and its pathway marked by uprooted forests, devastated fields, ruined dwellings, death and misery.

No sooner had the shutters of the house been secured than the tornado struck the dwelling, lifted the roof, dropped it and the timbers upon the people beneath, and went roaring on its way, leaving them terrified and bruised.

"Don't stir," said Benkei. "Lie low. Its tail has not yet passed. It sometimes does more damage than either the head or body. The *Tai-fu* is caused by a dragon invisible to mortals."

In another moment a second gust swept down upon them, bringing with it limbs of trees, portions

BICYCLE RACING AT CHESTNUT HILL RESERVOIR, BOSTON.—SEE PAGE 298.

of buildings, field-implements and empty varnish tubs, some of which spun like tops high into the air; at the same time the boys felt the shock of an earthquake. When the elements had expended their force the people crawled from their places of concealment and surveyed the scene, which was one of ruin and desolation, the tornado having wrecked everything in its path.

"I am sorry for you, Mr. Yamo," sympathetically observed Orville, as the old man ruefully regarded his leveled buildings and overturned lacquer-tubs. "What will you do now?"

"Go to work again," he calmly answered. "If we were to fold our arms and murmur against the elements we should starve. My only regret is I was fool enough to buy that paper of the bonzes," pointing to a strip pasted above the doorway of his house, the inscription of which was thus translated by Benkei:

"Temple of Mut-suo, *Namu Amida Butsu* (Hail great Buddha) whose protection against hurricanes, all demons, death by wind, fire or sword, is by this given to the husbandman Yamo, his wife, visitors and family."

"That cost me five thousand cash," growled Yamo.

"They swindled you," said Benkei. "We only used to charge a thousand."

"*Wo!*" cried Mrs. Yamo, who had hereto occupied herself with fishing her cooking-utensils from the ruins. "Were you ever a bonze?"

"Yes," faltered Benkei; "but I have given up the business, and am now about to enter the Mikado's employ."

"Ah, wretch!" exclaimed the indignant woman, rushing at him and entwining her fingers in his bristly hair. "You are the cause of the visit of the *Tsi-fu*. I will make you suffer for it!"

ADDIE GESNER, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 11, BERGEN SQUARE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

Benkei was a mild youth, and by far too polite to offer resistance to a lady, so he let her shake him as much as she liked, his only expostulation being:

"Oh, if you please, let me go! I had nothing to do with the *Tsi-fu!* I am no longer a believer in such superstition!"

"I don't care!" she screamed, as she succeeded in extracting two bunches of bristles from his scalp. "I thought you were some sort of a Ronin, for when you came in my cat blinked three times."

"Good woman, good woman!" said her husband, who during this comedy had been giving instructions to his uninjured men, "do not make so much noise; you are almost as bad as the *Tsi-fu*. Let the young man go. You must not blame him for the decision of the emperor."

Up to that time Orville and Dan had been watching for an opportunity to interpose in their friend's behalf, and now, when the angry woman paused, went to his aid.

"It is indeed not his fault," said Orville, placing himself before Mrs. Yamo. "We are truly sorry for the trouble that has overtaken you, and we are willing to subscribe ten thousand cash toward repairing your loss."

This somewhat mollified her wrath, and when they had each of them given her a silver coin worth the promised amount, she sat down upon an upturned lacquer-tub and expended the balance of her anger in a flood of tears, after which she lighted a fire and cooked the midday rice.

The catastrophe had brought laborers and farmers from far and near, and before sunset Yamo's dwelling and out-buildings were re-roofed and his lacquer-tube cleaned and ready for use.

"Your neighbors seem real kind folks," observed Dan, as the old man superintended the work.

"Yes," he nodded; "in a case of this kind the poor wretch who is struck by the dragon does not lose everything. To-day they fix my premises, and to-morrow will clear up my fields and each contribute a certain quantity of lacquer to replace my old stock. When the *Tsi-fu* visits your country and cleans a man out, do not his neighbors help him?"

"My friend," replied Dan, "I am like George Washington, I cannot tell a lie. There are many good people in America, but our customs are different from yours, and we have no dragons. If a whirlwind strikes a man's house and blows his crop into his neighbor's farm, he has to fix things himself and paddle his own canoe."

Yamo listened with respectful surprise, his only remark being:

"You Americans help yourselves, we Japanese assist one another."

"We help each other, too," said Orv. "My brother has not got it quite right this time. What he meant to say was we, as a people, are very independent and rather decline aid from outsiders."

Yamo chuckled over this, and rejoined his workmen, muttering to himself:

"We didn't invite foreign assistance, but you came with your guns and your ships, anyhow—perhaps it was all for the best."

It must not be imagined that Orville, Dan and Benkei remained idle while the others worked. They had assisted Mrs. Yamo to put her kitchen and bath into order, and by nightfall the good woman quite recovered her serenity of temper, treating Benkei as though she had never gone for his hair.

When all the strangers had retired she set out the rice and tea, and as she served the food, expressed her regret at having deprived Benkei of some of his growing crop, to which he good-humoredly replied:

"I'm always ready to submit to anything that pleases a lady."

"You are a most polite young man," she graciously observed, "and I hope the Mikado will give you an important position."

They chatted over their meal, and the boys asked various questions, among their remarks being:

"Is your cat a good mouser, old lady?" (a term of respect, when applied to an elderly woman).

"What?" she cried. "I don't understand your question. A mouser; do you think he would trouble such horrid creatures? He is not a dog."

"Eh," said Orville; "don't you keep cats to catch mice?"

"No, indeed," she indignantly answered. "We value them as friends and companions, not as beasts of prey."

"Upon my word," ejaculated Dan, "you puzzle me. Why, in our country cats are kept for the purpose of clearing the dwellings of rats and mice."

"They must be demons," she said; "we have cats of that kind, but ours have nine tails and torment human beings."

"Yes," put in her husband, "and we have other mysterious cats that have two tails, and are supposed to be the ghosts of bad-tempered women."

At this point of the conversation Benkei, who had been busily employed in eating, remarked:

"My friends are quite right in their astonishment at the uselessness of cats, though it was not always so with those animals. In the old times, when Tsuné-tsuhi was asked to rise against the Taira, he laughed bitterly and replied: 'For an exile to plot against the Taira is like a mouse rebelling against a cat.'"

"That does not prove our cats ever eat mice," snapped Mrs. Yamo, catching up her pet and fondling it. "I give my beauty soft boiled rice; he is a good Buddhist, and has never tasted meat."

"I suppose you let him have plenty of milk," said Orville, using the American word for the liquid. As the woman did not reply, but looked at him in amazement, he turned to Benkei and demanded: "What is milk in Japanese?"

For a moment the young man appeared bewildered, then making a sign to the brothers, he whispered:

"Don't talk of such a thing; it is not considered nice."

"Gracious me," blurted out Dan, in English; "haven't you a word to express it?"

Benkei made a peculiar gesture, and answered in the same language:

"For goodness sake don't say anything more on the subject. We think your custom of using that stuff more barbarous than the Ainos drinking bears' blood. It is really a most dreadful idea, and one I shall never adopt. Please let us speak of something else."

The old lady was very anxious to hear what they had been talking about. However, knowing if she learned the truth she would regard his friends as something worse than cannibals, Ben changed the conversation to the subject of their departure, while the boys, sending for their luggage, produced the balance of their illustrated newspapers and made their host and hostess happy by presenting them with the whole bunch.

At daybreak the next morning the travelers enjoyed a bath, and after partaking of rice, fried eggs and tea, started for Waka-matsu, where Benkei had some relatives who were engaged in making lacquer-ware.

As they bade adieu to their friends, the old lady shed tears of regret, and they saw her for the last time standing in the doorway, hugging her cat and calling out in a quavering voice:

"*Sai-o-nara! Sai-o-nara!*" (Farewell! Farewell!)

The *Tsi-fu* had only devastated a tract about half a mile wide, and they were soon again among fields of rice, tea and cotton, groves of mulberry and plantations of lacquer-trees.

"See," said Dan, pointing ahead, "here comes a man painted all over."

"Hush," said Benkei, "he's a *bonze*."

(To be continued.)

"Orville and Dan" was commenced in No. 217.

Distinguished Scholars of Jersey City (N. J.) Schools.

ADDIE GESNER,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 11, BERGEN SQUARE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

ADDIE GESNER was introduced to us as a meritorious pupil of the Female Department of Grammar School No. 11, Bergen Square, Jersey City, N. J. We passed some time in this department, and saw the pupils at their studies, and when dismissed at noontime they looked both happy and intelligent. Addie Gesner was born at Red Bank, N. J., December 30th, 1864, and is therefore fourteen years of age. She is the daughter of

SIMEON S. POST, PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 11, BERGEN SQUARE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

John G. and Elizabeth Gesner. From the age of seven until nine years she attended school at Red Bank, and made excellent advancement in her studies. Then she entered the first primary class of Grammar School No. 8, in Jersey City, and later went to school at Long Branch. At length she became a pupil of the second grammar class of the Female Department of No. 11, and from that was promoted, after a critical examination, to the first class. "During the whole time that Addie Gesner has been in this department," said the lady Principal, "she has studied diligently and her deportment has been most exemplary. I can conscientiously say everthing in her praise." She has a pleasant face and modest manners. These days in school are happy days, for she loves its duties, and is trying more and more to deserve the esteem of her teachers and classmates.

SIMEON S. POST,

PUPIL OF GRAMMAR SCHOOL NO. 11, BERGEN SQUARE, JERSEY CITY, N. J.

SIMEON S. POST is a boy who has set out to make his mark in school, and nothing can stop him. If he could be discouraged by hard work in study, or by the many other obstacles which all pupils encounter, he might be turned back, but he has so much energy, and he experiences so much pleasure in the pur-uit of knowledge, that he presses on at all times with a vigor which shows no abatement. He is now in the first class of Grammar School No. 11, Bergen Square, Jersey City, N. J. He has an equally smart brother in the same class. He was born in Jersey City, October 1st, 1866, making him in his thirteenth year. He is the son of Levi W. and Fannie R. Post. At first he attended private schools, and finally entered Grammar School No. 11, in the higher primary branches. He has been promoted regularly, and not only this, but he has made unusual progress at every examination which has caused him to be regarded as far above the actual average standing of his classes. He has a head with much development in the upper portion, and a face which is expressive of both intelligence and amiability. There is a great deal of common sense about all of his proceedings, and the two things which he seeks above all others are, first, to be a good and obedient son, and second, to maintain the rank of a studious and improving scholar.

BICYCLE RACE AT CHESTNUT HILL RESERVOIR, BOSTON.

THE bicycle season in Boston was opened in handsome style on Saturday, May 10th. The "meet" was in Chestnut Hill Reservoir, and the contest was given under the auspices of the Suffolk Bicycle Club. Considering the disadvantage of a strong head-wind for half the distance, the time made by the contestants is regarded as quite remarkable. Gold and silver medals were offered as prizes by Amos A. Lawrence, who, after the races, entertained the club at his elegant country seat. The following is a summary of the contests:

QUARTER-MILE RACE.

	Heats. First.	Second.	Third.
Russel S. Codman	3	1	1
George R. Agassiz	4	2	2
John C. Sharp, Jr.	2	3	dr
G. Tappan Francis	1	dr	dr
F. B. Abbott	5	dr	dr

Time—38⅝s; 39⅛s; 42s.
First Prize—Russel S. Codman.
Second Prize—George R. Agassiz.

ONE-MILE RACE.

	Heats. First.	Second.
Russel S. Codman	1	1
Edward P. Sharp	2	2
Frederick S. Whitwell	3	dr
George W. Beale	4	dr

Time—3m 32⅛s; 3m 29⅛s.
First Prize—Russel S. Codman.
Second Prize—Edward P. Sharp.

FIVE-MILE RACE.

G. Tappan Francis	1
Philip Little	dr
John C. Sharp	dr

Time—18m 41⅝s.
First Prize—G. Tappan Francis.
Second Prize—Not awarded.

A very great and quite extensive interest in bicycling, both as a pleasure and as a means of healthful, invigorating exercise, was manifested in the Eastern and Middle states in 1868-69. Courses were established, and the paths were thronged and crowded with the two-wheeled vehicles, and it was even proposed to provide them in the post-office department to facilitate the collection and delivery of letters. Bicyclists, having no show on the streets, took possession of the sidewalks, and in a few weeks pedestrians had little show there. In New York the novelty was so overdone that it soon ran its course, and of late years but few bicycles have been seen, save in pawn-shops and junk-stores. In Boston, however, the vehicle has remained popular. With over four hundred in use there, it has not been difficult to organize and maintain clubs, and these clubs, by their Summer contests, have greatly increased the interest in the "bone-shakers."

The best mile yet made in this country was by Mr. Agassiz, of Cambridge, last Autumn, in the race of the Boston Bicycle Club at the Chestnut Hill Reservoir, in 3min. 21½sec. The quickest 40-mile ride yet made here was by Mr. H. E. Parkhurst, in November last, from Boston to South Framingham and return, just forty miles, in 3h, 36min., and the best 20-mile run on the same gentleman's return trip from South Framingham on the same occasion, in 1h. 36min. The entire run was made without a single rest, and with only one dismount. A 100-mile run has been made by the Jacquith Brothers, of Brookline, within the suburbs of Boston, in 11½h. Of course, all these runs have been outdone in England, where the roads are in better condition, while the riders have had several years' experience, whereas most of our riders have practiced the art only from six to eight months, and not more than one or two professionally. Probably the best rider in all respects in this country, as regards endurance, gracefulness of motion, and skill in "fancy riding," is Mr. William B. Pittman, of Boston.

In the six days' professional race at Agricultural Hall, London, which began April 26th, Mr. G. Waller rode 253 miles the first day, and at the end of the second day had covered 457 miles. Mr. T. Andrews rode 220 miles on the first day without a dismount. These are the best records ever made, and are perfectly marvelous. In this race they were not allowed to ride over eighteen hours per day.

The experiences of ages has demonstrated that exercise is as essential to good health as proper food. Any one acquainted with physiology and the laws of health will see at a glance that riding the bicycle must be not only pleasant and exhilarating, but highly conducive to health. In this sense bicycling is a hopeful sign of progress. It that man is a benefactor who makes two blades of grass grow where but one grew before, he should come in for a share of praise who teaches a man to go ten miles as easily and as quickly as he previously went four. "Time is money," and whatever of it is saved is often so much cash. As the bicycle serves its purpose in this direction, it may be regarded as a good savings institution. Riding the bicyle affords pleasurable excitement, which is what most men drink liquor for, and it leaves no sting behind. It takes men out into the pure air, into God's light and sunshine, and braces their lungs with the very breath of heaven. It is an inducement to young men who work in close apartments to spend more time in the open air, and furnishes them with a means of healthful, invigorating, and at the same time pleasant, exercise such as nothing else can possibly afford.

The bicyclist in New England has now his club, his course, and definitely outlined routes for suburban excursions, and his literature, a capital brochure by Charles E. Pratt, A.M., having been issued by the Pope Manufacturing Company of Boston. There is no reason why, with the excellent roads in and about New York City, there should not be a multitude of clubs and equal amusement, excitement and health in this exercise.

A seventy-two hours' tournament was opened in the American Institute Building, New York City, on Wednesday night, May 14th, with eight contestants, William De Noille, "champion of America," the favorite in the race; William E. Harding, an ex-champion of New York; Professor William C. McClellan, another ex-champion; A. P. Messenger, of Troy, "long-distance champion"; Charles H. De Noille, son of the inventor; William Rutland, "champion of England"; Daniel Belard, "champion of France"; and Thomas Walsh and W. H. Darling, both of New York, but not "champions."

Following is the complete score at 10:07 P. M., May 16th, just forty-eight hours from the start:

	Miles.	Laps.		Miles.	Laps.
De Noille, Sr.	378	2	Darling	198	1
De Noille, Jr.	358	0	Harding	355	1
Rutland	325	1	Walsh	346	2
Belard	275	1	Messenger	136	5

Both of the De Noilles expected to make over 500 miles within the seventy-two hours.

THE SUDDEN TERMINATION OF A PLEASURE EXCURSION.

A LADY who passed the Summer of 1878 in Europe gives us an account of one of the most miraculous escapes that we have ever heard of. We give it in her own words:

"We were staying at a little village called St. Croix, in the Canton de Vaud, and as we were a pretty large party of Americans at the hotels we were firmly resolved upon having a picnic. All the arrangements were soon made, and we started for the mountains, a merry and contented party of fifteen.

"After a few hours' climbing among the rocky paths we selected a cool, shady spot under the shelter of a large, overhanging rock. This place was a favorite resort of the numerous tourists who visited that part of the country, and was the reason that we had selected it for our excursion.

"We were quietly enjoying our meal when a dull, rumbling noise was heard, and a few stones came tumbling down among our party. In terror we sprang to our feet and hurried away from the spot, just as a huge boulder of rock, accompanied by a shower of stones, came crushing down into our midst.

"One of our party, a Miss Maddox, stumbled and fell just as the first stones began to fall, and to this lucky accident she owed her life, for the rock, weighing about ten tons, fell within six inches of her body, even touching her dress, and then rolled right over her and thundered down into the valley below. With the exception of a few bruises, none of our party were seriously hurt, and Miss Maddox's wonderful escape was for a long time after the talk of the whole neighborhood."

PAROLE.

THE brilliant success of Mr. Pierre Lorillard's stable in England, and the remarkable manner in which Parole came to the front, deserved a word of mention from every periodical in the country. Parole is a brown gelding, six years old, standing sixteen hands, without white marks; has a very neat and handsome head and neck, good, sloping shoulders, a depth of girth, good forearm, rather light middle piece, excellent hips and quarters, and unexceptionably good legs and feet. He is by imported Leamington (son of Faugh-a-Ballagh and a daughter of Pantaloon), dam Maiden, winner of the Travers Stakes in 1865, by Lexington; second dam Kitty Clover, by imported Glencoe; third dam Miss Obstinate, by Sumpter; fourth dam Jenny Slamerkin, by Tiger; fifth dam Paragon, by imported Buzzard; sixth dam Indiana, by Butler's Columbus; seventh dam Jane Hunt, by Hampton's Paragon; eighth dam Moll, by imported Figure; ninth dam Slamerkin, by imported Wildair; tenth dam imported Cub mare, by Cub; eleventh dam Amaranta's dam, by Second, etc., and so on through nineteen crosses to Layton Barb mare. The family from which he has descended is one of the most noted in American turf history. The Cub mare was imported by General Delancy, of New York, prior to the Revolution. From her have descended some of the very best racehorses and stallions in America, including such brilliant names as Childers, Ratler, Sumpter, Flirtilla, Ivanhoe, Polly Hopkins, Ringgold, John Bascomb, Cassandra, Mary Morris, Wild Irishman, Frankfort, Countess, Count D'Orsay, etc. Parole commenced his career as a two-year-old in 1875, in Saratoga, by winning the July Stakes, three quarters of a mile, carrying 97 pounds, 1:17¾, and the August Stakes at the same meeting, one mile, carrying 97 pounds, in 1:54. The last appearance of Parole in America was at Monmouth Park, N. J., in a race for the Monmouth Cup, when with 121 pounds on his back he galloped away in front of Virginius, General Phillips, and Joe, winning easily. In the Autumn he was sent to England with the others of Mr. Lorillard's stable. He won the Newmarket Handicap at the Craven meeting on Wednesday, April 16th, carrying a penalty of 110 pounds, in a field of six starters. Mr. F. Gretton's four-year-old bay colt, Isonomy, 124 pounds, came in second, and Count F. de Lagrange's six-year-old chestnut mare, Lisa, 106 pounds, third.

On April 22d he won the City and Suburban Cup. Before the race the betting was forty to one against him, but he won easily against a field of eighteen, carrying a penalty of 119 pounds. The Lorillard stable is said to have won $400,000 by this event alone.

On Wednesday, April 23d, Parole added another victory to his score, again defeating some of the best blood in England, the Great Metropolitan Stakes. In this race he only competed against one horse, Castlereagh, but fifteen others declared forfeit.

ROY, THE RANGER.

A Tale of the Mexican War.

CHAPTER XXII.

[Continued from page 286.]

"A FEROCIOUS deed!" exclaimed Roy.

"Was it not? But Santa Anna did not long retain his power after that. He was deposed, confined for a time in the Castle of Perote, and then sent into perpetual exile."

"That exile is at an end; Santa Anna has returned to Mexico with greater power than he ever possessed before," returned Roy.

Donna Eusebia held up her hands in dismay.

"I have heard something to that effect," she cried; "but I could scarcely believe it. Well, well, if he conquers these North Americanos, they will probably make him Emperor, as they did Iturbide."

"And depose him as quickly," replied Roy; "but it-his chance of wearing the Imperial Crown depends upon his defeating the North Americanos, I would not give much for it. Civil strife has been the curse of this land. It will be more peaceful when the North Americanos have taken the City of Mexico."

"Heaven forbid that they should do that!" cried Donna Eusebia, in dismay. "I have a house and land there—an elegant mansion, that I hope you will one day honor me by visiting, Señor Bellingham."

Donna Eusebia had some difficulty in pronouncing this long English name.

"I shall endeavor to do so," rejoined Roy; but he did not tell her that when he came it would be in company with the dreaded "North Americanos."

"But tell me," he added, "why you are residing here, in the very front of the war, when you have a house in Mexico? You would have been much safer there."

"We know it now," replied Feliciana; "but this is a pleasant residence at this season of the year. We pass a certain portion of our time in the year here. When we heard of the advance of the invading army, we were about to remove, but General Arista assured the inhabitants that this city never could be taken. He led his army forth, confident of victory."

"He has been twice defeated," responded Roy. "His army now is nothing but a rabble. This city swarms with thieves and murderers."

"To-night's experience has convinced us of that," said Donna Eusebia; "but for you, Señor Bellingham, we should have been murdered and the house plundered."

"How came the villains to intrude upon you?" questioned Roy.

"Our servants all fled, alarmed by a report that the North Americans were advancing to assault the city. I wished to fly also, but Feliciana thought it would be safer for us to remain in the house, for she said the North Americanos were too brave a nation to injure two helpless females."

"She was right, madam. There was more danger from your own countrymen, it seems."

"Yes, Feliciana and I were thinking of retiring to rest when these four ruffians burst in upon us. They made us set before them the best in the house, as you see—to think we should be obliged to entertain rascals like them."

"They did not belong to the regular army?"

"No, from what they said they were a part of Romano Falcon's band."

"Ha!" cried Roy. "If I had known that I might have gained some information of——"

He checked himself suddenly as he saw their eyes turned wonderingly upon him.

"Of what, señor?" inquired Feliciana.

"The friend I spoke of."

She looked surprised, crying:

"Is your friend a member of that band?"

"No, no; but there are those in that band who could give me tidings of—him," he answered.

If the band were in the city, Zeta must be with them, he reasoned. He resolved to return and endeavor to gain some information of her. He had been about to return to his boat with the conviction that his search for her would be idle; but now this adventure appeared to have given him a clue.

He felt that he must make another effort.

"Your pardon, señoras, but I must leave you," he said, as he came to this conclusion. "I must look for this friend of mine."

"You shall not leave us!" cried Donna Eusebia, apprehensively. "If those dreadful robbers should return."

"There is little fear of that, I think," replied Roy. "They were punished too severely before they left."

"He must seek his friend," said Feliciana; but her eyes begged him to remain, in a soft, beseeching, and unconscious glance, despite her words.

"I will drink a glass of wine to your healths, señoras, and then I must go," said Roy.

Feliciana hastened to fill a glass of wine, and handed it to him with a winning grace.

"Faith! never was man served by a fairer Ganymede!" exclaimed Roy, gallantly. "Your healths, ladies!"

He drank the glass of wine.

As Feliciana took it from his hand, they heard the sound of many voices in the garden.

"Oh, heavens!" exclaimed Feliciana. "The robbers! They are returning!"

The glass slid from her fingers and fell to the floor, where it was shattered to pieces. Donna Eusebia screamed shrilly. Roy placed his right hand on his pistol-butt, but he did not draw it.

"Fatal negligence!" he muttered. "I have not reloaded my pistols. No matter, my sword must serve. Courage, ladies—it may be a false alarm. Here, this way—fly to the upper part of the house, and I will guard the door."

Donna Eusebia fled precipitately through the inner door; but Feliciana remained.

"I will stay with you," she said. "Their knives shall pierce my breast before they reach you!"

Roy cast an admiring glance upon her.

CHAPTER XXIII.

A FEMALE COLONEL.

"DON'T think of dying, whilethere's a chance to live," cried Roy. "Don't attempt to make your body my shield. Stand back in the doorway here, give my sword-arm free play, and I will defend myself as well as you."

Feliciana obeyed these instructions, and scarcely were they uttered than a dozen men rushed tumultuously into the room.

They were led by the two bandits whom Roy had put to flight, and close behind them were Estevan and Ned Graghty.

Roy's hopes rose when he saw Graghty's rugged visage.

"There he is!"

"Down with him!"

These cries were fiercely uttered by the foremost bandits. Feliciana shrieked in terror as she beheld this infuriated throng of swarthy ruffians.

"Hold up!" shouted Ned Graghty, in stentorian tones. "Don't slice him up too sudden. There's only one of him, and a female, and sure she don't count. I want to take him prisoner. Stand back, I tell you. Let me look at the chap that could wallop four of you—he'll make an elegant recruit for our band."

The Mexicans paused, though with decided unwillingness, at his command, and Ned Graghty confronted Roy, flourishing a huge cavalry sword in his hand. He was a formidable-looking opponent.

"Drop that cheese-knife, my boy, and surrender at discretion," continued Graghty. "You haven't a sight against us now. You might scatter some of these yellow fellows, but I am made of different mettle."

Roy smiled at Graghty's swaggering manner, and lowered his sword-point.

"I do surrender," he answered.

"That's where you're sensible!" cried Graghty; and then he turned to the scowling Mexicans, who still grasped their weapons in a threatening manner. "Didn't I tell you I'd bring him to terms, you spalpeens?" he demanded.

"What do we want with a prisoner?" exclaimed Estevan. "He has killed two of my men—Rafael and Hernandez—he deserves to die!"

"Kill him—kill him!" chorused the Mexicans, fiercely.

Feliciana sank upon her knees behind Roy and clasped her hands together in supplication. Death appeared to be his doom inevitably.

"Whist! stay, now!" roared Graghty, and he wheeled round and gave his long sword a portentous sweep that made the bandits shrink back. "If there's any killing to be done, I'll attend to it myself."

"These are my men," said Estevan; "I command them."

"And I command you, by the same token!" retorted Graghty, impressively. "Can't you wait a while till I have a little speech with him? He's one of your countrymen, by his toggery."

"No, I am not."

"What the divil are you, then?" inquired Graghty.

Though Roy had lowered his sword-point in token of surrender, knowing that he had nothing to fear from Graghty, yet he kept a wary eye upon the Mexicans, doubting their treacherous nature, and not feeling sure that Graghty's interference in his behalf would prove sufficient for his safety. He now lifted his sombrero from his brow with his left hand, and exposed his face fully to Graghty's view, saying:

"Do you not know me, Graghty?"

The bandit was utterly astonished.

"Mother o' Moses! it's young Bellingham!" he exclaimed. "Begorra! I thought there was something mighty familiar in the sound of your voice! But who'd have thought of finding you here, and in that toggery! Bedad! you're as fond of masquerading as that femayle relative of yours. But I'm glad to see you, anyhow."

He shook hands cordially with Roy, and Feliciana, with a sigh of relief, rose to her feet.

"Heaven be praised! he will escape with life!" she murmured, gratefully.

"And I am glad to see you, under the circumstances, I can assure you," Roy answered; and he laughed in his own careless fashion.

Graghty turned to Estevan.

"You see which way the wind blows now?" he said. "It is lucky for some of you that I didn't let you cut his throat when you wanted to. She'd had never forgiven you if a hair of his head had been touched."

"He is the señora's son," Estevan said to the Mexicans; and those brief words appeared to have a strange potency over their revengeful feelings.

"*La Señora!*" they muttered, and the greater part of them sheathed their knives.

Gonzales still felt the smart of the bullet that had passed through his arm, and a handkerchief was bound around Miguel's gashed cheek.

"He killed Rafael and Hernandez," muttered Gonzales, "and wounded me."

"And me!" added Miguel, angrily.

"It's a bad business," answered Estevan.

"It was a bad business," cried Roy. "Here were four men insulting two defenseless women. I heard their cries for help and came to their aid. I bade your men be gone, but they, counting on their numbers, thought fit to assail me. They can only blame themselves for what has happened."

All the Irish blood in Ned Graghty tingled sympathetically for Roy.

"Of course—of course," he cried. "Let the femayles alone. Plunder as much as you like, but don't abuse the women! You know how Romano Falcon got served—and you know how the señora would serve you if she heard of this night's work."

"You will not tell her!" questioned Estevan, apprehensively.

"I? bad manners to you, Estevan! what do you take me for?" replied Graghty, indignantly. "Do you think I'd demane myself to turn informer? There, take your men back to our quarters—and take the two stiff ones along—and say they got killed in a free fight—bedad! there's plenty of that going on in Matamoras just now—and that will be the end of it. Leave me with the boy—I want to have a bit of a chat with him."

Estevan and his Mexicans withdrew, greatly to Feliciana's relief.

"Oh, heaven has been good to me to-night!" she exclaimed. "Señor Bellingham, let me thank your friend."

She advanced to Graghty and offered him her hand. He took it awkwardly, gazing delightedly in her face.

"You're welcome, my purty dear—Mother o' Moses! look at the eyes of her!" he cried; and he winked hard at Roy with his left eye. "Begorra! I don't wonder you were ready to fight for her, my boy. She's a jewel of a girl."

This, for Feliciana did not know English, was not understood by her, though she could not fail to see the admiration so plainly depicted upon his face.

Roy did not like to see this young and innocent girl on such familiar terms with Graghty, though he knew she was disposed to be friendly with him on his account.

"You had better go and see your aunt, Feliciana," he said to her in Spanish. "See her and assure her that the danger is passed, and that she can now seek her couch in tranquillity."

"Oh, but she must come down and thank your friend first!" cried Feliciana, vivaciously.

Roy followed Feliciana to the inner door, and laid a restraining hand upon her arm. She turned and looked surprisedly in his face.

"Do not bring your aunt down, Feliciana," he whispered. "It is not proper that she should be introduced to this man."

Her surprise increased.

"Why—is he not your friend?" she inquired.

"Not in the sense you mean."

"I thought he was the friend you were seeking."

"No, he is not; though that is a very natural supposition on your part. The friend I seek is of a different stamp altogether. This man can lead me to him, however, and I must be gone at once."

"So soon?" she asked, plaintively.

"Yes; for I must recross the river before daylight, or my boat will be discovered and my retreat cut off. So I must bid farewell now."

"Must you go?"

"Indeed I must. An imperative duty calls me." He turned to Graghty. "I must see your captain—you understand?" he said.

"Indade, I do! a nod is as good as a wink to a blind horse," replied Graghty. "And mighty glad that same captain will be to see you, I'm thinking."

"Are his quarters far from here?"

"About half a mile."

"Let us go at once."

"Whist, my boy—draw it aisy—a half a mile is soon made by legs as long as ours. This is an illigant spread out." His eyes lingered pleasantly upon the table. "It would be a pity to leave without taking a snack when it looks at you coaxingly, as much as to say: 'Try a mouthful, and a glass of wine to make it slit aisy on your stomach. By your leave, señorita."

Feliciana understood him thoroughly this time, and was eager to avail herself of any circumstance that would prolong Roy's stay in the house.

"Certainly, by all means," she cried, quickly. "Let your friend refresh himself, Señor Bellingham, before you depart. I will serve you—for you also must partake."

Graghty took his seat at the table with the air of a man who always took a good thing when it came in his way.

"Sit down, my boy, sit down," he said, waving his hand to Roy in a patronizing manner. "Never neglect the craythur comforts when you can find them, and—begorra! they're mighty handy feminest me at the present moment. What kind of wine have you here, señorita?"

"She cannot understand you," said Roy.

But he was mistaken in this, for although Feliciana did not understand the words addressed to her, she fully comprehended Graghty's meaning by the significant manner in which he looked at the flasks upon the table. She took up one and placed it before him.

"Thank you, my jewel," he said, as he removed the stopple and put the mouth of the flask to his nose.

"*Aguardiente!*" he ejaculated, in a satisfied manner. "She doesn't understand what I say, eh? Begorra! she seems to understand what I want, though."

Roy laughed.

"There's no doubt of that," he rejoined. "She's bit your taste, but I prefer something milder."

"Every one to his liking, as the monkey said when he preferred cocoanuts to rice. He filled himself a glass from the flask of *aguardiente*. "Here's your best health, señorita," he continued, raising the glass and nodding his head to her in a grotesquely gallant manner. "Isn't she an illigant specimen of a girl, Master Roy?" he added to him, with a confidential wink.

"She is very pretty," answered Roy, indifferently, sipping his wine.

Graghty emptied his glass in one mouthful, and smacked his lips approvingly.

"That's the stuff!" he cried. "They make a mighty good tipple in this country—almost equal to whisky."

He filled his glass again.

"What, another ready?" cried Roy.

"Aisy, my boy. The first glass is always a taste, the second is a confirmation of its goodness, but you don't get the full flavor of the brewing until the third."

"If I was to drink three glasses of that fiery liquor I would never know when morning came."

Graghty drank his second glass, and shook his head in a compassionate manner as he refilled it for the third time.

"You're young yet, my boy," he answered, "and your head's not properly seasoned. Practice makes perfect—and begorra! I've had enough of it in my time," he added, with a grin.

"Don't drink too much, or you will not be able to show me the way to your captain's quarters," cautioned Roy.

"Never you fear! I never put myself outside of more liquor than I can comfortably carry, although I might be overcome by way of accident, do you mind, by reason of making a miscalculation in the number of glasses."

"That's what I'm afraid of now."

"You needn't be. Just one glass more, and a few of those cakes, and then we'll be going."

Roy emptied his wine-glass thoughtfully.

"Your band is known as Romano Falcon's?" he said, in a questioning manner.

"Yes."

"But I understood from her that this chief of yours was killed."

"Did she tell you so?"

"Yes."

"But she didn't tell you who killed him, I'll go bail!"

"No, she did not."

"Well, she did."

"Heaven! She—Zelia! kill this bandit chief! How could she?"

"Begorra! it was the aisiest thing you ever saw in your life. She challenged him to fight a duel, and then pinked him quicker than a wink."

"I can readily believe that, for I taught her to fence myself."

"That's what she told Tom Hartnett and myself that night when we were taking a little refreshment together. She's the smartest woman I ever saw."

"She's the strangest I ever saw!"

"She's a whole team—Joan of Arc, Tom Hartnett calls her, though I haven't much idea who Joan was, for I never heard of her in Irish history."

"No; the scene of her exploits was not in Ireland."

"I thought not; that's the reason why I never heard of her. The señora, as we call her, just stepped into Romano Falcon's shoes, for she not only took possession of his regimentals, but his name."

"She calls herself Romano Falcon?"

"Faith, she does, and passes herself off for a man all the time. She found a colonel's commission among Falcon's papers, made out in his name, and so she just organized a regiment, picking up recruits anywhere. Hartnett, Estevan and myself did this for her, and she offered the regiment to General Arista, and he accepted it. But we got pretty well walloped in this last fight with General Taylor, lost a hundred men, and our she-colonel had a narrow escape."

"Yes, she charged my rangers."

"You don't tell me so?"

"Yes; it was one of our bullets that struck her helmet from her head."

"I didn't know who we were charging, only that we were ordered to recapture the guns. Hartnett was dreadful anxious about her. He's afraid that she will get killed."

"Why should he care?"

Graghty laid the fore-finger of his right hand against the right side of his nose significantly, and winked hard at Roy with his left eye.

"Did you ever hear the saying that 'There's no fool like an old fool,' eh, my boy?"

"I certainly have," replied Roy, laughingly, "though I would not pretend to assert the truth of the saying."

"Begorra! there never was a truer word said. Tom's dead in love with this woman, and she has only to crook her little finger at him to make him do whatever she pleases."

"That's singular."

"Singular? Is it just beats the old boy! She's chief, because she's got him on a string, don't you see? and he keeps the band in order for her."

"And you?"

"Oh, I just stick to Tom, as I always have done."

"But Estevan, who is the leader of the Mexican element in your band, how does he like this?"

"Estevan? Begorra! he's a spaniel dog to her—worse than Tom, he is. He enlisted all the rancheros in our crowd."

"Did you have a full regiment?"

"We had enough to call it a regiment. There was six hundred of us at Palo Alto, about four hundred and fifty at Resaca de la Palma, but I don't think we muster over two hundred now. It's not that we had so many killed, but our chaps were the devil and all for running away."

"Yes, I had a specimen of the calibre of your men in the four that were here."

"Yes, you dusted them out nicely; but they were all yellow-belli-ed, my boy. If you'd had an Irishman, or a Scotchman, or a Johnny Bull amongst them, you wouldn't have come off so easily."

"Perhaps not. Have you many of those countrymen amongst you?"

"About fifty—all deserters from the American army, and under Hartnett's immediate command. They are the body-guard of our colonel, and they'd fight like bine blazes for her; but Hartnett keeps the whip-hand as a reserve, and don't waste their lives. He knows what he's about."

Roy became reflective over these details.

It appeared to him so strange that Zelia, whom, from childhood, he had always looked upon as a gentle and loving creature, should suddenly evince such amazonian characteristics, and league herself with desperate men, the refugees of all nations.

He could ascribe but one reason for her strange conduct—insanity.

"She certainly is crazy," he told himself. "No woman in her right mind would act as she is doing."

Feliciana had seated herself at the foot of the table, and had received a glass of wine that Roy had filled for her, but she had merely sipped at its contents.

Intent upon their conversation, they had almost forgotten her presence; but she was content to sit and watch Roy's face, with a childish eagerness, although she could not understand what he was saying, for the dialogue between Roy and Graghty was carried on in the language in which I have written it.

"Now, let's be off," cried Graghty, after he had drained a final glass of *aguardiente*.

They both arose to their feet, and Felicina followed their example.

"Farewell, señorita," said Roy, taking her hand. "Advise your aunt from me to quit this place tomorrow morning, as soon as you can obtain a conveyance. It cannot hold out against our troops, and if it should be carried by assault you would be in great danger here."

"We will depart to-morrow," answered Feliciana. "But shall I ever see you again?" she added, plaintively.

"Oh, yes; I have no doubt that we shall meet in Mexico, and then the war will be at an end."

"I hope so."

There came the clash of a sabre scabbard, the jingling of spurs, and a form, clad in a handsome uniform of the lancers, strode into the apartment.

"It's the colonel," said Graghty.

CHAPTER XXIV.

A METAMORPHOSIS.

ROY turned his eyes curiously toward Zelia, as she came in. The uniform she wore fitted her admirably. The visor of her helmet concealed all of her face above her eyes, and, to Roy's great surprise, the lower part of her face was graced with a reddish-brown mustache and imperial.

She appeared to be a man of small stature, but graceful and active. There was nothing suggestive of the woman about her. She was as tall as a great many Mexican officers, but Roy had seen, for that nation is not celebrated for its large men.

If Graghty's words had not apprised him of the fact, he would have doubted that it was indeed Zelia that now stood before him.

But the sound of her voice soon assured him that he had again encountered this erratic woman.

"So, Roy, you have got into difficulty again," she cried, "and, luckily, I am at hand to get you out of it again."

She cast a searching glance at Feliciana, and Roy could see by the flashing of her eyes that she was not pleased with the company in which she found him.

"This is the girl for whom you so recklessly risked your life?" she continued. "It was well for you that Edwardo was at hand, or the knives of these rancheros would have let some of that hot blood from your veins. Who is this maiden?"

"Permit me to introduce her to you," replied Roy. "This is the Señorita Feliciana Santmanet. Feliciana, this is——"

"Colonel Falcon of the lancers," interrupted Zelia, quickly; speaking Spanish, as Roy had done.

"Ah, I see you wish to be——"

"Hush!"

"She does not understand English."

"Ha—good! Yes, Roy, she must only know me for what I appear to be." Zelia advanced to Feliciana and grasped her hand with a courtly and patronizing grace. "Señorita, I am pleased to know you," she said, in Spanish.

Feliciana was very favorably impressed.

"Oh, you are his countryman," she cried, vivaciously.

Zelia cast a questioning look in her innocent face. "Are you sure of that?" she demanded.

"Yes; I know it by the way you speak our language."

"Ah, indeed? You are shrewd for one of your years. Yes, señorita, I am his countryman—nay, more, we are related."

"Related?"

"Yes, for we bear the same name, though I have adopted the Mexican appellation of Falcon in this country."

Roy could see that these words made Feliciana very friendly toward the supposed colonel. He could see also that Zelia was striving to win the maiden's confidence, but he could not very well understand her motives for so doing.

Indeed, it was not an easy task to determine Zelia's motives.

"Edwardo, join the mess without," said Zelia to Graghty. "You will find them in the garden. Await my coming. I wish to have a talk with Roy."

"All right, colonel," answered Graghty, saluting in military fashion. "I'll see that you are not intruded upon."

"Very good."

"*Adios, señorita!*" cried Graghty, with a gallant flourish of his hand to Feliciana; and having thus used some of his scanty knowledge of Spanish, he retired, his long sabre-scabbard clashing at his heels as he went.

Zelia glanced at the table.

"You seem to have had something of a feast here," she said. "Is the wine good?"

"Yes, sit down," answered Roy. "Here is a flask I can recommend. This table was spread for four of your band; but not satisfied with the good cheer thus freely extended to them, they proceeded to insult. I was passing by—I heard her screams, and—but Estevan must have told you."

"Yes; and I am grateful to you indeed to him," rejoined Zelia, taking a seat at the table. "How reckless you are! Will you never outgrow that failing?"

"I am afraid not, particularly when a pretty girl requires my aid," answered Roy, laughingly.

Zelia shot a sharp, swift glance at Feliciana.

"She is pretty," she responded. "I hope you will not lose your heart to her."

Though Zelia put this question lightly, Roy, who knew her so well, detected a tone of anxiety in her voice.

"Pshaw! I have something better to do than fall in love," he returned.

"That is a fell men take when they least expect it. You don't know your own heart. What boy does?"

It was evident that Zelia's mind was ill at ease, and that the beauty of Feliciana's face troubled her.

"What a blaze of light you have here!" she continued, abruptly. "What is all this illumination for? Do put out some of these candles."

"Certainly. This was a freak of some of those ruffians whom you command. I am afraid two of them have gone to a place where they will never feel the want of a blaze."

Roy extinguished all but four of the candles.

"How is that, colonel?" he asked.

"That's right—give me that title."

"And a glass of wine. I will drink to your speedy promotion."

He filled two glasses of wine, and gave her one, bobnobbing with her.

"Here's hoping you will soon be a brigadier-general, Colonel Falcon," he cried, merrily, and drank his wine.

She was vexed at first, but she could not resist his merriment, and yielded to it, bursting into a laugh so mellow and musical that, Feliciana stared in wonder for a moment, and then joined in the laugh with her.

This merriment rang through the house with a strange sound. It was like a farce after a tragedy. It penetrated to the upper story, and reached the ears of Donna Eusebia, who was listening at her door in a tone of torturing suspense.

She could not understand what had taken place. Every moment she had been tempted to descend, but when she made a movement her heart failed her. This merry laughter reassured her; all danger must be over, she reasoned; but why had not Feliciana called to tell her so?

Feliciana was there, for she could distinguish her laugh from the others—and there was another woman there. Where had she come from?

Donna Eusebia could hesitate no longer. She swiftly descended the stairs, and appeared suddenly to the merry group at the table.

Feliciana was the first to see her.

"Why, here is aunt!" she cried.

"My dear child!" exclaimed Donna Eusebia, excitedly. "You are alive! And Señor Bellingham, and the bandits—where are they?"

"Gone, aunt. The danger is over."

"Why did you not call me and tell me so?" inquired Donna Eusebia, somewhat reproachfully. "I have been in a dreadful state of suspense."

"Pardon me, dear aunt, I was about to do so, but the arrival of Colonel Falcon——"

"Colonel Falcon?" Donna Eusebia gazed amazedly at Zelia in her handsome uniform. "Of the Mexican army?"

"Yes, aunt; and he is a relative of Señor Bellingham. Was ever anything more fortunate?"

"I must introduce you," Roy said to Zelia. "What relative are you to be—my brother?"

"No, Roy," she answered, sweetly. "There is not family resemblance enough for that. I will be your cousin. These Mexicans are of good family?" she added, curiously.

"Yes, and wealthy. I have an idea that they belong to the aristocracy of the City of Mexico; at all events, they have a house and lands there."

"Indeed! Then their acquaintance may be useful to me!" muttered Zelia.

Roy presented Colonel Falcon in due form to Donna Eusebia, who was very much gratified by the introduction.

"But where's the lady?" she said, glancing around her with a perplexed look.

"What lady?" inquired Roy.

"The one I heard laughing here before I came down."

Roy smiled, and Zelia burst into her rippling laugh again.

"Oh! it was you?" cried Donna Eusebia, surprisedly. "I thought it was a young woman, like Feliciana here."

Zelia bowed her head graciously in acknowledgment of the compliment.

"It was I, madam, that you heard," she answered; "and although I am somewhat effeminate in my nature, I can scarcely lay claim to the youth and grace of your charming niece. But my effeminacy does not interfere with my services in the battle-field, as Señor Bellingham here can testify."

"He is a relative of yours, Feliciana informs me?" questioned Donna Eusebia, becoming very much interested in this handsome colonel.

Roy smiled as he observed this.

"The Donna is caught," he told himself. "What a wonderful power of fascination this strange woman has! I don't wonder that my father loved her, for she possesses the art of pleasing to a most perfect degree."

"Yes, madam, we are cousins, and my name is Bellingham, like his—Zelia Bellingham; but when I entered the Mexican service I changed it to Romano Falcon."

"It seems strange to me that you should have taken service in the Mexican army, señor colonel," observed Feliciana.

Zelia caressed her false mustache carelessly as she replied:

"I am a soldier of fortune, señorita, with only my sword to depend upon, and I must take the service that offers me the best hope of profit. I would win an estate and a dark-eyed bride among your fair countrywomen, possibly, by helping to drive these North American invaders from the sacred soil of Mexico."

The ladies were impressed by these glowing words; but Roy smiled and whispered:

"You haven't driven us very far yet."

Zelia shrugged her shoulders and answered:

"Wait—the end is not yet."

Then she addressed herself again to Donna Eusebia.

"I have made free with your table here, madam, which it appears was set for some unruly members of my regiment. I must apologize for their intrusion upon you. It was against my orders; but strict discipline cannot always be preserved, particularly when an army is demoralized by a reverse. But my cousin, here, punished their insolence; though I am afraid his temerity would have cost him his life if he had not been recognized by one of my captains."

"We can never be too thankful to him," exclaimed Donna Eusebia. "All beneath this roof is at your disposal. I am proud to offer you my hospitality, and I am sure two braver gentlemen never sat at my board. I will join you in a glass of wine, señor colonel, for I am really faint after all the excitement of this night."

Donna Eusebia and Feliciana took their places at the table.

The donna now found she had some appetite as well as thirst, and the whole party were soon partaking of the repast before them in a cheerry mood, and Zelia kept up a flow of small talk, mingled with little gallantries and flashes of small wit, that quite charmed both the aunt and niece, and made Roy smile amusedly.

"She will have them both in love with her," he thought. "They have no suspicion of this handsome colonel's true sex. How blind some women are!"

In the course of the conversation Donna Eusebia found an opportunity to again relate the story of her brother's unhappy fate, and she availed herself of it gratefully. Zelia listened to her attentively.

"You wish to go to Mexico City?" she inquired.

"Yes, if we can only get a conveyance to take us from here," answered Donna Eusebia. "If we could only get to Monterey, I have friends there."

"Madam, I will arrange that part of your journey for you, with the greatest pleasure," rejoined Zelia. "I will obtain a conveyance for you in the morning, and a trusty escort from my regiment shall guard you on the way."

Both the ladies were loud in their thanks for this proffered service.

"Can you do this, Zelia," cried Roy, in English.

"Yes, of course I can; but please call me Zelia, instead of Zelia. I never promise anything that I cannot perform. I have orders now to lead my regiment to Monterey. General Arista is about to evacuate Matamoras. The next stand of the Mexican army will be made at Monterey."

"We shall take it!" cried Roy.

"Don't be too confident. I can tell you something that will surprise you. Let me send the ladies to their slumbers and then we will talk."

"That's what I want," rejoined Roy.

Zelia smiled. It was a gratification to her to know that he felt even that interest for her.

"Donna Eusebia," said Zelia, having recourse to her Spanish again, which she spoke with considerable fluency, "if you and your niece desire to retire to rest, you can do so with every sense of security. A detachment of my soldiers guard the house, and you will not be disturbed again. Take what rest you can to prepare you for the morning's journey."

Both Donna Eusebia and Feliciana were thankful for this proposal, and the immunity of peril thus assured to them.

They expressed their gratitude to the colonel for his kindness and consideration, and then retired, leaving Roy and Zelia alone together.

When they were gone, Zelia took off her helmet and placed it on the table.

"It is heavy, and makes my head ache at times," she said.

But there was some coquetry in the action, for when her helmet was removed her head did not wear the feminine look that Roy had expected, but was like that of a young man, with crispy, golden curls clustering like little rings all over the head, and giving it a somewhat bushy appearance.

"Have you cut your hair?" cried Roy.

"No, I have only tucked it under with hairpins to give it a manly look," she answered. "Don't I make a handsome man, Roy?" she added, with a smile.

"You are a wonderful woman, Zelia!" exclaimed Roy.

She smiled again.

"Ah, you are beginning to think so, are you?" she rejoined. "I shall surprise you still more."

"There's one thing that will not surprise me."

"What's that?"

"If you get killed."

She shrugged her shoulders negligently.

"Death has no terrors for me. I like the excitement of the battlefield."

"I can understand that; but it appears to me that you are out of place there. Do you know how near you were to death in this last battle?"

"My helmet-strap was broken by a stray bullet that struck the top of it, that was all," she answered, carelessly.

"No, it was not all," cried Roy, impressively. "That bullet was sent by Tom Meade, the keenest marksman in our whole company. I have seen him hit a swallow on the wing, when we were hunting together in our boyish days, and that's a feat few men can do. He had you in range, his finger was on the trigger, when I struck up his carbine. If I had not done so, he would have sent a bullet through your brain."

She evinced some surprise at this, but she returned, placidly:

"Why did you do so?"

"Because I thought I recognized you."

"And you did not wish to have me killed?"

"Of course not."

Zelia surveyed him with a look that puzzled him.

"You saved my life, and yet I do not thank you for it," she said, moodily.

"Why not?" he asked, surprisedly.

"Because you will not make that life worth the having to me," she answered, pointedly.

He looked annoyed.

"Zelia, you are mad!"

"I may be, but 'there's method in my madness'!"

"I don't like the method," he rejoined, dryly.

She bit her lip vexedly.

"Zelia, I wish you would give up this masquerading and go home," he continued.

"I will, on one condition," she said, quickly.

"What is that?"

"That you go with me."

"Impossible!"

"It is equally impossible with me."

He was silent, making no attempt to conceal his annoyance, and her brows contracted into a frown as she observed the expression of his face.

"You also are masquerading," she resumed, after this slight pause. "Why are you here, in this dress, in the midst of your foes? Did you come here to seek a spy's death?"

"No; I came to seek you."

She smiled at this, crying out, eagerly:

"You did?"

"For no other purpose."

"Why seek me? You are not so fond of me that you need risk your life for my sake!" she cried, pettishly.

"Zelia, I thought I could appeal to your womanhood, and induce you to abandon this wild life you are leading. It will surely prove fatal to you if you do not."

"Roy Bellingham, one word from your lips will make me do as you desire. Shall I tell you what that word is?" Her voice trembled at these words, and her eyes were eloquently supplicant. "You have only to say to me——"

He started impatiently to his feet.

"I beg you to desist!" he said, sternly.

Her lips quivered.

"Cruel as ever!" she murmured.

"Zelia, never recur to that subject again," he continued, with stern gravity. "If you would not have me despise you——"

She stretched out her hands imploringly to him, crying, plaintively:

"No, no, Roy—anything but that!"

"Do you forget that you are a woman?"

She sprang to her feet, with flashing eyes and heaving breast.

"I would forget it—I will forget it—to every one but you—and even you, since I cannot impart to your breast one spark of that flame that burns so brightly in mine!" she cried, passionately. "Yes, Roy, you have unnerved me. I will be a man, and play a man's part in these scenes of strife. I do not wear this sword alone for ornament—I can use it!"

"And to some purpose," he rejoined, with a smile. "You used it upon Romano Falcon."

"Ha! who told you that?" she asked, vexedly.

"The man you call Edwardo."

"Talk of a woman's tongue—men babble full as much! Well, do you despise me for that?"

"I? no. Though I cannot understand why you should have killed the bandit."

"Because he insulted me. Did I not tell you I would live worthy of you or die?"

"But why remain amongst these ruffians? why become their chief?"

She smiled.

"May I not be possessed of a like spirit of adventure as yourself?" she urged. "This excitement is strangely fascinating to me. Besides, it enables me to be of great service to you—can you deny it?"

"No," answered Roy, in his old, honest fashion; "but I don't want you to get yourself killed on my account."

"If I am killed you will have no further anxiety about me," she answered, coldly. "Perhaps it may be a relief to you."

"No, no, Zelia; do not speak in that way. Will you not go with me to Fort Brown? I have a boat waiting for me at the river's bank. Go with me, change this attire for one more befitting your sex."

"I like this garb too well."

"Well, then, if you are determined to be a man, why not come and fight on our side?"

"By your side?" she cried, vivaciously.

This proposal appeared to tempt her greatly.

"But, no, no!" she continued, quickly. "I could not hold the same position there that a fortunate chain of events has placed me in here; nor could I be of the same service to you."

"To me!"

"Yes, Roy; your army is now flushed with victory, but do not think that the handful of men that General Taylor commands can ever conquer Mexico. This first success will lure him to his ruin. He will be allowed to march into this country until he is cut off from retreat, and then he will be overwhelmed with numbers."

"General Arista will not dispute the passage of the river?"

"No; he will retreat to Monterey. It is a strong position. Your army will be destroyed beneath its walls, Roy, and then you will be glad to have Colonel Falcon amongst your captors. I can save you, and I will."

Roy was satisfied that he could urge nothing further to change her determination, and he was eager to return to the fort with the valuable information he had obtained.

"You will find that Monterey will fall before our arms," he said: "and I am more likely to be your captor than you are mine. I suppose I must leave you here, though I am loth to do so. It appears to me as if I ought to take you with me by force."

He made a step toward her, as if to seize upon her. She laughed disdainfully, crying:

"Who is mad now? Do you think you could take me, Roy, against my will?"

He looked as if he thought he could, and was very much disposed to do so.

"I think it would be the best thing for you," he said.

"Dear boy! I know that you could lift me up in those strong arms of yours and carry me with ease, though I am by no means fragile," she said, laughingly; and she advanced to his side and placed her head on a level with his shoulder. "Do you think you could carry me to your boat?"

He twined his arms suddenly about her figure, and lifted her with ease from the floor, and as her face came in contact with his, she kissed him, her false mustache tickling his face unpleasantly. He put her down at once, confusedly, and she laughed at his confusion, though she was vexed at the repugnance with which he received her caress.

"There, you see you cannot carry me," she said. "Were I alone and unaided here you could not; but you appear to have forgotten that I have a squad of my men in the garden here, and I do not believe that they would suffer you to carry their colonel away a prisoner, although Edwardo is your friend. They obey me implicitly."

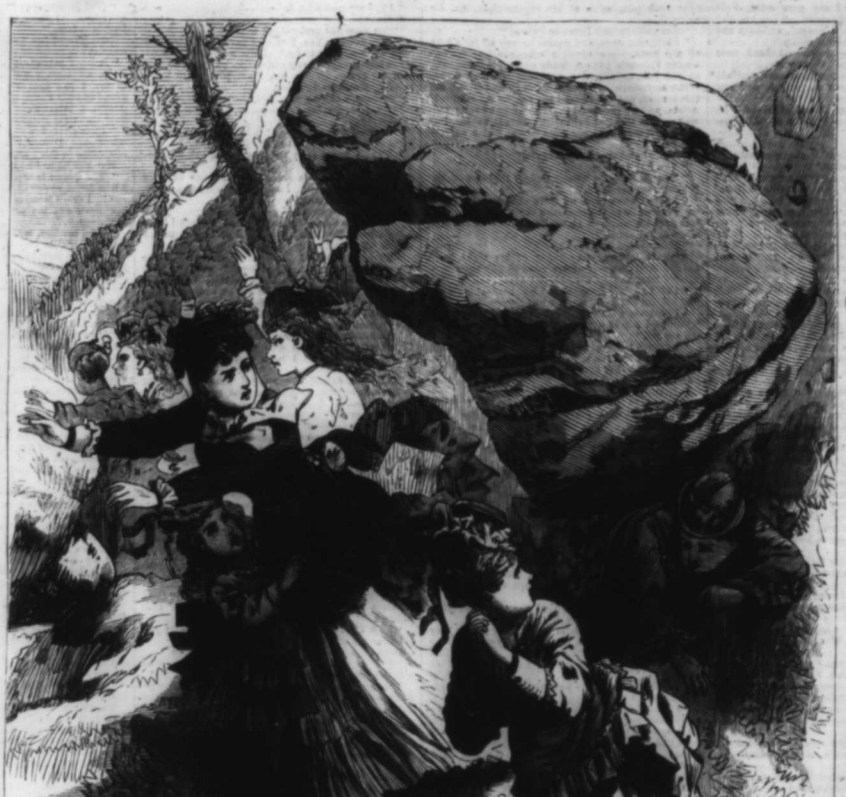
"You are right, Zelia, force is out of the question," he admitted; "and I have killed enough of your band for to-night; but I wish you would go with me willingly."

"So I will."

"You will?"

"As far as your boat, to see that you depart in safety. Come."

She resumed her helmet, and they left the house together.



THE SUDDEN TERMINATION OF A PLEASURE EXCURSION.—"IN TERROR WE SPRANG TO OUR FEET AND HURRIED AWAY FROM THE SPOT, JUST AS A HUGE BOULDER OF ROCK, ACCOMPANIED BY A SHOWER OF STONES, CAME CRUSHING INTO OUR MIDST."—SEE PAGE 298.

CHAPTER XXV.

MATAMORAS.

ZELIA led the way, and Roy followed her. As they entered the garden he realized that any attempt to have forcibly taken the female colonel with him would have been an utter failure, for he saw the forms of her men in all directions.

He judged that there was at least twenty of them scattered amongst the shrubbery in various attitudes, some lying down on their blankets, and others smoking cigarettes, whilst the stout form of Captain Edwardo—or Ned Graghty, as we know him—leaned against the gatepost. He saluted as Zelia and Roy approached him.

"Is he off?" he inquired.

"Yes, Edwardo; and I am going to the river's bank with him. Follow me, at a discreet distance, with five men," answered Zelia.

Zelia linked her arm in Roy's as they passed through the gate into the street.

The moon shone brightly above their heads, and its rays glistened upon the steel plate of Zelia's helmet, the rich lace trimming of her uniform, her bright cuirass, and the silver scabbard of her sword.

Her spurs jingled merrily as she walked, keeping step with Roy with a firm, manly tread.

She presented a fine martial appearance, despite her small figure, and Roy could not fail to be favorably impressed by it.

"You should have been a man, Zelia!" he exclaimed, suddenly.

She looked up in his face and smiled, understanding well the cause of this exclamation.

"You have made me one, Roy," she answered.

"I doubt if I shall ever return to my woman's dress again. In the old days, in our Boston home, when, for the sake of pastime, I made you teach me the use of the sword, I little dreamt that I should ever use one in real warfare. You cannot imagine what confidence that skill which you imparted to me gives me in myself. Would you believe that I, a woman, could hold these lawless men in check and make them obey me?"

"It shows you to be a woman of a strong will and indomitable courage."

"Yes, I have courage—I make no boast in saying so. My courage is equal to your own, and I have more experience of the world to temper it."

He smiled and shook his head dissentingly.

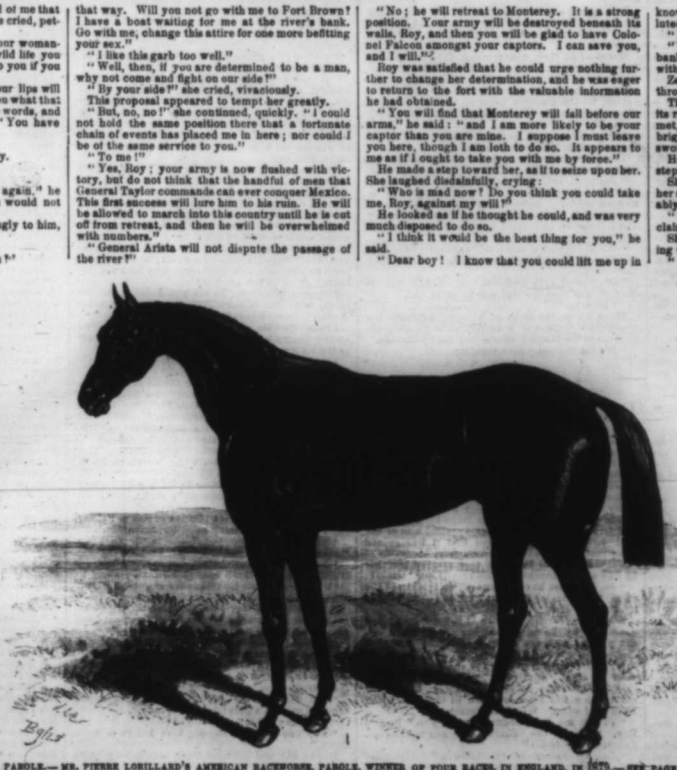
"Yet you rashly exposed yourself at Rosaca de la Palma," he said.

"True. It was necessary to give my men an example, and I was vain enough to think I might snatch a victory from the very verge of defeat. It was a desperate venture—just such a one as you would have made under similar circumstances."

"I suppose I should," Roy admitted.

"The Tampico Battalion, the hope of the army, was shattered and dispersed. La Vega had been captured whilst attempting to discharge one of his deserted cannon. It was my hope to retrieve the field by one desperate charge. It failed; but had it succeeded, I should have been the hero of the day."

Roy listened amazedly at these glowing words, so much in accordance with his own enthusiasm.



PAROLE.—MR. PIERRE LORILLARD'S AMERICAN RACEHORSE, PAROLE, WINNER OF FOUR RACES, IN ENGLAND, IN 1879.—SEE PAGE 298.

"You have the true spirit of a soldier, Zella!" he cried. "I really begin to think that Nature intended you to be a soldier."

"Or a soldier's wife," she added, with suggestive significancy.

"Yes; you may become the wife of some celebrated Mexican general, who would be proud of such a heroine," he replied, pretending not to understand the suggestion she had so artfully thrown out.

"Pshaw! you know what I mean," she exclaimed, pettishly.

"Santa Anna himself, I believe he is a widower," continued Roy, in the same strain. "He has lost a leg, but he has supplied the deficiency with a cork one, so that his misfortune does not detract from his personal appearance. I have heard that he is a very distinguished looking man."

"You will have an opportunity to judge from personal inspection before long," she answered: "for Santa Anna is about to assume the command of the Mexican army. You may be conducted a prisoner into his presence."

"Well, you will be there to save me, you know," he rejoined, gayly.

"Oh, yes."

"Our being on different sides isn't such a bad thing, after all, Zella," he continued, in the same jocose manner; "because, when I get into difficulty, you can get me out of it; and, when you get into trouble, I can help you."

"What a boy you are!" she cried. "Well, if you see the name of Colonel Falcon amongst the list of the slain in the next battle, you will know that my career is at an end."

"Why have you taken the name of Colonel Falcon?" he inquired, as if swayed by a new thought.

"There were various reasons for it. In the first place, I discovered that the bandit had a colonel's commission amongst his papers, and, as I wanted a Mexican name, I thought it would be a good idea to take his, and the rank he had obtained along with it. He was an adventurer, and not likely to have many friends or relatives. Tomaso, his lieutenant, gave me his effects, not knowing what they consisted of, and I found quite a large sum of gold in his military chest. I gave a handsome sum to Tomaso, without revealing the source from whence I derived it."

"You were wise there."

She laughed, looking up in his face with one of her peculiar glances.

"Oh, do you think so?" she cried, demurely. "Yes, Roy, I have cut my wisdom teeth, I think. I told Tomaso that I would convert the band into a regiment, and that they should no longer be robbers, but soldiers. He liked the idea."

"I should imagine that he would. He's an old rascal; but there's some good traits about him."

"Oh, yes; he has the good trait of doing exactly as I wish him to, which makes him very serviceable to me."

"I should say so."

"He seconded my plans ably; the regiment was organized. I put on these false mustaches and imperial, which I obtained from a barber in Matamoras here; donned the regimentals, which a tailor here prepared for me; presented myself to General Arista, and the regiment was accepted."

"Without question?"

"Without question; I represented to the general that I was an Austrian by birth, which would account for my light complexion and hair, that I was attracted to this country by a love for war, and that I had seen service in the Old World, and that I could afford to pay my regiment, if the government could not."

"That must have been a consideration; though I think your regiment will pay itself."

"You need not laugh at my rogues, Roy. They will fight as well as any regiment in the Mexican army. These two battles have given us a good name."

"I would retire on the strength of it, and keep prudently in the rear after this," he advised, laughingly.

"I intend to, as much as possible. But you will see that there will be very little more fighting. You cannot possibly resist the army that is being raised to overwhelm you."

"We will have to take our chances. There lies my boat, under the shadow of those trees. That is, I left it there. Let me see if it is still awaiting me."

He gave the signal, the cry of the whip-poor-will, that had been agreed upon, and it was answered from the river.

"All right! It is there!"

"Then here we part," said Zella; and there was a sad cadence in the tone of her voice as she pronounced the words. "When shall I see you again?"

"You can see me in this city to-morrow, if you will only await my coming. You can do so at the house of Donna Eusebia Santmanet."

"No, I cannot," she answered. "I march at daybreak for Monterey. You do not realize what I tell you, that I am in earnest in this new vocation. To you alone, Roy, I am a woman; to all else Colonel Falcon, a name which is already mentioned with commendation in the bulletins of the Mexican army."

"Then, all I can say is farewell, and success to your martial achievements."

He held out his hand to her.

"Are you not going to kiss me good-by?" she inquired, pettishly.

"Men don't kiss each other," he answered, dryly.

"Oh, yes, they do—in Mexico, as in France."

"Well, then, when you are in Turkey be a Turkey! Good-by."

ROY THE RANGER.—"'HOLD! IT IS A FRIEND OF MINE.' HE ROSE IN THE BOAT AND WAVED HIS HAND TO ZELLA. SHE RETURNED THE SALUTE AND DISAPPEARED."—SEE PAGE 296.

He bent down, kissed her—rather lightly—hurried to his boat, stepped into it and said:

"Push off, boys; my mission is ended and everything is favorable."

The two rangers bent to their oars and sent the boat out from the shadows into the moonlit stream.

Roy sat in the stern of the boat, his face being directed toward the opposite shore.

An exclamation from one of the rangers startled him from a fit of musing into which he had fallen.

Both the rangers ceased rowing and pointed to the bank they had left.

Roy turned his head to look, and saw Zella standing on the bluff above the river, the moonbeams disclosing her figure with a strange distinctness, and playing with a singular effect upon the trappings of her uniform.

"We are discovered!" cried one of the rangers.

He relinquished his oar and grasped his carbine. Roy heard the click of the lock as he cocked it. He turned quickly, crying:

"Hold! it is a friend of mine."

He rose in the boat and waved his hand to Zella. She returned the salute and disappeared.

"Go on," said Roy, resuming his seat. "Strange and inexplicable woman! Shall I ever see her again?" he murmured to himself.

They reached the fort without misadventure, and Roy went to his quarters.

He found Toss stretched out upon his cot, asleep, but a candle was burning on the table, and the preparations there, in the shape of whisky, water and cigars, appeared to indicate that Toss had waited for him until overpowered by nature, and, possibly, by the whisky.

Roy did not disturb Toss, but he blew out the candle and reclined upon his own cot, all dressed as he was, to snatch a short slumber before daybreak.

When he awoke it was past eight o'clock in the morning, and he found that Toss had a breakfast prepared for him.

"Why did you not wake me before?" he inquired.

"Oh! I thought I would let you sleep," answered Toss. "I knew you must be tired after your night's adventure. I tried to sit up for you, but old Morpheus proved too much for me."

"Was it Morpheus or whisky?" asked Roy, slyly.

"Six of one and half a dozen of the other, I guess. So you came out of your scout wholesome? It's more than I expected, though. But some fellows are born under a lucky star, and I guess you are one of them."

"I begin to think so myself."

"Well, how did you find things over there?"

"Shaky! We shall take the city without a fight."

"Do you think so?"

"I'm positive of it."

"Well, that's good. Just as little fighting as possible, that's what suits me."

"You look sharp after Number One."

"You bet I do! If I didn't, who would? Did you find her?"

"I did, by the merest accident, when I had given up the hope of doing so, and was returning to the boat."

"How was that?"

Roy briefly related his night's adventures, and Toss commented freely during the narration as his surprise was excited.

"Mrs. Bellingham will get killed, in spite of fate; just mark my words!" he exclaimed.

"That's what I think."

Toss shook his head in an oracular manner.

"The pitcher that goes often to the well——"

"Yes, yes, I have heard you say that before."

"And now I say it——"

"Oh! drop it! Give me a cup of coffee, and then I must be off to General Taylor's headquarters. Have my horse saddled, will you, while I am eating my breakfast?"

Toss poured out a cup of coffee for Roy, and then went to have his horse prepared, singing, as he went:

"Oh, give me but my Arab steed,
My shield and falchion bright,
And I will to the battle speed,
To conquer in the fight!"

Roy ate his breakfast, mounted his horse and rode to where General Taylor had encamped his army in the chaparral, near the river's bank.

On arriving, he inquired for Captain Walker, and was directed to his quarters.

Walker hailed his appearance with a glad cry of welcome.

"Here you are, my boy! I knew you could do it," he exclaimed. "I told the general that if any man could you could. Well, how did you make out? Have you any news worth telling?"

"Judge for yourself," replied Roy, and he gave him an account of what he had heard and seen in Matamoras.

"Glorious, by Jupiter!" cried Walker. "The general will be delighted. Come along; we'll call on old Rough-and-Ready at once. General Worth's come—arrived last night, and takes his old command. I can get you on his staff, as I said before, if you want to go."

"No, thank you, captain. I prefer to remain with the rangers at present."

"All right, I don't want to lose you; I only spoke in regard to your interest. Come along."

General Taylor received them in his customary bluff and hearty manner, listened attentively to what Roy had to say, and thanked him for the information, commending the skill and bravery by which it had been obtained.

"I must do something for you, Lieutenant Bellingham," he said. "General Worth has some vacancies on his staff, and if you would like to fill one——"

"I was speaking to him about that, general," interrupted Walker; "but he doesn't wish to leave the rangers just yet."

"Very good. Perhaps he can be of greater service to the army there. He appears to be particularly adapted for scouting duty."

Captain Walker and Roy retired.

Preparations were now begun to cross the river and take possession of Matamoras.

All the boats on the river were secured, and before nightfall everything was ready for a descent on Matamoras the following morning.

General Arista proposed an armistice, but as General Taylor thought that this was only a pretext to gain time it was declined.

Then General Arista marched his army out of the city, taking the road to Monterey.

Apprised of this by some of the inhabitants, who crossed the river for that purpose, General Taylor deputed Major Greig, Captain Walker and Lieutenant Bellingham to wait upon the authorities of Matamoras, and demand the surrender of the city.

After sounding a parley, Roy crossed the river with a white flag, and was met by a committee of the citizens, headed by the prefect.

The prefect, being assured that all private property would be unmolested, and that the inhabitants would be undisturbed in the possession of their civil and religious rights, said that General Taylor could march his troops into the city at any hour that might suit his convenience. Thus Matamoras surrendered.

Captain Walker, with his rangers, crossed the river and took possession of Fort Paredes, and Roy raised the Stars and Stripes over it, where they floated for the first time over the acknowledged soil of Mexico. (To be continued.)

"Roy the Ranger" was commenced in No. 6.1.

TALES WITH BOYS ABOUT FOREIGN LANDS.—TIRNOVA, CAPITAL OF BULGARIA.—SEE PAGE 302.

WANDERING WILLIE;

Or,

Lost in the Bush.

The Adventures of a Missionary's Son in the Wilds of Africa.

CHAPTER XV.

QUEEN JUMAH—THE BURIAL OF SANEOBRA.

WHEN Willie did not return to Kasonga City Queen Jumah became uneasy.

She made frequent inquiries for him, and scouts were dispatched in every direction to look for him.

King Urinza did not altogether approve of this solicitude.

He had been indulging rather freely in pombi and palm-wine, or he would not have given open expression to his opinions.

"You seem to take a great interest in the boy!" he said.

"Why shouldn't I?" replied Jumah, turning her large, black eyes upon him.

"Because it does not seem right."

"Does it not?"

"No; decidedly no. I am your husband."

Jumah looked at him with indescribable scorn.

"I am tired of you!" she exclaimed.

"Of me?"

"Yes. I divorce myself from you. Henceforth you are free. Take gold and ivory and go to the sea. Begone! I wish to see you no more."

Urinza rubbed his eyes with amazement.

"Divorces take longer than that in America," he said; "and they are mighty smart about them in some States, too."

"Go!" cried the queen, stretching out her hand.

"I don't want to leave you, my baby," he replied.

"Bah! I love another. Willie shall be my young king."

Urinza tore a strip off a tobacco-leaf and put it in his mouth.

"I'm sorry for Willie," he said, in a low tone.

"What's that?" she demanded.

"Nothing. I only said that Willie is a lucky fellow. Well, good-by; I'm off."

Urinza was secretly glad to have the chance to go.

He returned at once to Matama and loaded twelve slaves with gold-dust and ivory.

Then he marched to the coast, sold his slaves and merchandise, afterward taking passage in a trading-vessel for Baltimore, which he reached in safety.

Meanwhile the queen hunted high and low for Willie, with whom she was madly in love.

The Kasonga people begged permission to bury the remains of their late king, Sankorra, in the usual way.

It was granted by Jumah.

The ceremonies that took place are probably unequaled in their savagery, but require to be briefly mentioned, as an indication of how much remains to be done by civilization in Africa.

The first proceeding was to go outside the city and divert the course of a stream for about a quarter of a mile.

In its dry bed they dug an enormous pit or grave, the bottom of which was covered with living women, fifty in number.

At one end a woman was placed on her hands and knees, and upon her back the dead king, covered with his beads and other treasures, was seated, supported on either side by one of his wives, while his second wife sat at his feet.

The earth was then shoveled in upon them, in spite of their tears, cries, and lamentations, and all the women were buried alive.

But that was not all.

Forty male slaves were dragged into the riverbed and had their throats cut over the grave, which was soaked with their blood.

Then the river was allowed to resume its course, and the limpid water flowed over the bloody spot where Sankorra's remains reposed.

Soon after this revolting ceremony had been accomplished scouts came in with the intelligence that Willie and his father had been seen journeying toward the mountains.

Calling together one hundred of his body-guard, consisting of amazons, the amorous Jumah started in pursuit.

She thought he was trying to escape.

Little did she think there was a rival in the case.

"Poor youth," she said; "he longs for freedom. He knows not the high honor that I propose to do him."

CHAPTER XVI.

A FRIEND IN NEED.

AFTER traveling some distance it was very apparent to Willie that his father's strength was failing him and that he could not go much further.

Mr. Hill did not complain; not a murmur escaped his lips, for he toiled on, under the burning sun, with true Christian resignation.

"Father," said Willie, halting under a clump of cocoanut palms, "you will break down if you do not rest."

"Not so," replied Mr. Hill. "It is the heat which prostrates me, and when the sun goes down I shall be better."

He looked up at the nuts hanging on the trees.

"Some of the milk in those nuts would be very refreshing," he added.

"Just what I was thinking," replied Willie. "But the trouble is to get at them."

"Very true. The trees are too steep and high to climb. Ah! There is a monkey."

Mr. Hill smiled.

"Of what use is the monkey to us?" he asked.

"Wait and you will see," replied Willie.

He knew the mischievous and vindictive nature of a monkey, and felt sure if he could only succeed in irritating the creature, it would retaliate.

Taking up a stone he threw it up into the tree.

Luckily it struck the monkey on the back, causing him to turn round and chatter angrily.

Soon it was joined by its sisters and its brothers, and its cousins and its aunts.

In fact, the whole family made their appearance.

All chattered and gesticulated violently, as if they felt that they had been insulted and outraged in the person of their relative.

"Ha! ha! ha!" laughed Willie. "You think you are safe because you can climb up trees, but I can hit you every time."

He cast up another stone, with similar success.

"I'm a pretty good shot," he remarked.

The indignation of the monkeys redoubled.

"Stand from under, pop," said Willie, quickly.

"What for?"

"You'll get hit if you are not smart enough to dodge the nuts."

"But I dout see any coming down yet."

"You will, though, mighty quick."

Scarcely had he spoken than the monkeys, who had evidently been talking among themselves and arranging a plan of action, began to pluck the nuts and deliberately throw them at Willie.

His father and he ran from under the trees, for, had they been hit by a nut, they might have been killed.

Willie had no desire to see which was the thickest, his head or a cocoanut.

In short, he was decidedly of opinion that the nuts would have much the advantage.

About five minutes sufficed to show the monkeys that they were wasting their ammunition.

As Willie did not throw any more stones, they concluded that they had driven off the enemy.

It was a glorious victory for them.

Chattering gleefully, they sprang from bough to bough, hung suspended by their tails, chased one another, and acted like lunatics generally.

The ground, however, was covered with the ripe, tempting fruit.

Picking up a stone, Willie broke a couple of nuts in half, saving the milk.Jand handed them to his father, who gratefully partook of the nourishment.

Then he slaked his own thirst, and felt much refreshed.

"Where did you learn that little lesson in natural history, Willie?" demanded Mr. Hill.

"Oh! I don't know," replied Willie. "One picks up lots of things worth knowing by traveling in the wilds of Africa."

Mr. Hill was so much invigorated by this fortunate repast that he insisted upon pushing on without wasting any more time.

"We must not rest till we have saved that dear girl," he remarked.

"I am very hopeful," replied Willie.

"So am I. If Benguela had wished to take her life he would have done so before he started for the mountains."

"True!" said Willie. "But I have this doubt in my mind."

"Which?"

"He may have reserved her for some hideous sacrificial rite."

"It may be so. Time will show," replied Mr. Hill.

They started again, and after traversing a sandy plain came to a swamp of large extent.

It was necessary to cross this.

These swamps, or morasses, are the greatest nuisance in African travel.

It takes a journey of miles and miles to get round them, and the traveler has to wade across up to his waste in muddy, stagnant water, loathsome reptiles abounding among the weeds.

They were fully two hours crossing this swamp, and felt very glad when they emerged upon the other side.

Much to their surprise, they beheld a caravan approaching from the side of the mountains, which were now distinctly visible.

It consisted of a man riding on a donkey; he was the leader. Two elephants and three camels, heavily laden. Seventy pagazi, or slave porters, each carrying a big load, and twenty men armed with rifles, revolvers and knives.

They had apparently come from the interior of the country, and were well supplied with valuable merchandise.

The caravan was heading directly for the swamp and in the direction of Kasonga, for which city it seemed as if they were bound.

Unless Willie and his father retreated through the swamp they stood no chance of escape.

What to do they did not know.

The caravan did not appear to belong to a slave-dealer. It more resembled that of a merchant.

Willie knew that many Portuguese traveled with caravans from the coast for the purpose of exchanging cloth and beads with the natives for the products of the interior.

"Let us stand our ground," said Mr. Hill; "who knows if Providence has not sent us a friend!"

Accordingly they walked slowly to meet the caravan, which was proceeding to skirt the swamp.

It was better for them to go round than to risk having one of their elephants stick in the mud.

When the leader perceived Willie and his father he made signs to them to come near.

They did not dare to disobey.

The caravan came to a halt.

When they reached the chief they perceived that he was a tall, handsome man of middle age, with a pleasing cast of countenance.

His complexion was dark, as was his bushy beard, but it was easy to see that he was a European, and they did not err when they set him down for a Portuguese trader.

"Ha! my friends," exclaimed he; "whither are you bound all alone? You have had some trouble, or my name is not Alvez."

Mr. Hill extended his hand.

"Signor Alvez!" he replied. "I thought I recognized you."

"Indeed!"

"Do you not recollect receiving an American missionary at your hospitable home in Loanda?"

"I do, distinctly. But surely you are not Mr. Hill!"

"You behold all that is left of that unfortunate individual. Thanks to the exertions of my son, Willie, here, I have escaped from the enemy."

Alvez shook him warmly by the hand.

He was the richest man on the coast, and well known over all that part of Africa as a sharp, shrewd, but yet honorable trader.

He always traveled with a gang of slaves as porters, and an escort of free men, well armed, to serve as soldiers.

But few chiefs ever dared to interfere with him.

Those that did, he taught a severe lesson to, for his repeating Remington rifles made fearful havoc with the ill-armed savages.

"I am very glad to have met you," he said, "and shall insist upon your accepting my protection to the coast.

"Willie shook his head.

"Many thanks," he said; "but I must refuse."

"Refuse!"

"Yes, signor. I have a duty to perform. My father, who is old and infirm, will go with you. It will be a relief to me to know that he is safe."

Alvez regarded the boy curiously.

"What is this duty of which you speak, my young friend?"

"A young girl, the companion of my travels, has been carried off to the mountains by the priests of Kasonga, and I must rescue her."

"I am well acquainted in Kasonga. Who has got her?"

"Benguela."

"In that case I sincerely pity her, for a bigger scoundrel never yet existed. But tell me, what has happened for Benguela to leave his master, Sankorra?"

"Sankorra is dead."

"Is it possible?"

"Yes, signor. The Queen of the Matamas has badly defeated the Kasongas, over whose country she now rules, after killing Sankorra with her own hands."

"This is great news," mused Alvez.

Willie seized his father's hand, which he raised to his lips.

"Farewell, father!" he exclaimed. "I am going after Birdie, and I leave you in the charge of this kind gentleman. Perhaps we shall never meet again."

"Do not say that, Willie," replied Mr. Hill, much affected.

"I am only one against so many."

"Stay! young man," cried Alvez, who seemed to have all at once made up his mind to a certain course of action.

Willie looked up expectantly.

"I am on my way to the coast with the merchandise I have purchased; but a day or two will make little difference to me, and I will devote such time as may be necessary to discovering the girl in whom you take such great interest."

Willie was scarcely able to contain himself at this generous proposal.

"How can I thank you?" he exclaimed.

"I want no thanks. Like yourself, the consciousness of having done my duty is sufficient."

It was about two hours after noon, and Alvez determined to push on to the base of the mountains before nightfall.

He deemed it inadvisable to take his burden-bearers with him, and, leaving five armed men to guard the caravan, he ordered the remaining fifteen to go in search of the priests who had carried off Birdie Merlin.

Dismounting from his donkey, he put himself by Willie's side, and they started at the head of the soldiers.

Mr. Hill remained with the caravan, which went into camp on the edge of the swamp, the water of which, though bad, was better than none.

They traveled through long rank grass, which is similar to the buffalo-grass, though the only game they saw was antelopes.

These they did not shoot, as it was not their intention to give Benguela any sign of their presence.

After a couple of hours' walking, during which Alvez and Willie conversed amicably together, they came across a muddy patch of ground, which had recently been trodden upon by several feet.

Willie examined the footsteps, and succeeded in tracing the print of a small boot.

That this belonged to Birdie Merlin there was no room for doubt.

"They cannot be far ahead of us," said Willie.

Alvez took a field-glass from his pocket and scanned the horizon.

"Ha!" he exclaimed, "I see some men at the foot of the nearest mountain. They have a prisoner with them."

"Allow me to look," said Willie.

The glass was handed to him, but look as carefully as he could he was unable to see anything.

"I can trace no men," he remarked.

Alvez was puzzled.

"Are you short sighted?" he asked.

"No; on the contrary, my eyesight is very good."

"But I distinctly saw what I described."

"It may have been a mirage," hazarded Willie.

"I think not. Give me the glass again, please."

[To be continued.]

"Wandering Willie" was commenced in No. 864.

EASY LESSONS IN PHONOGRAPHY, OR SHORT-HAND.

REPORTING WORD-SIGNS.—CONTINUED.

LAST week we gave you a list of the full-size, single stroke word-signs. This week we have more, but with the addition of the hooks and circles. These lists will continue for two or three weeks, until complete, before we give you exercises on them, so that, if you do not learn them thoroughly now, you will then have no refer back. We do this to avoid the necessity of your writing the signs for words any longer than necessary, and so that we can make complete sentences with the reporting signs.

These signs require but little explanation; they speak for themselves, and are the same in actual reporting. Every L and R, F and N hook, and circle S means considerable. In most cases, only a part, and the most suggestive part, of a word is used for the whole word, omitting also all the vowels. Y hook stands for *ever*, as in whichever, whatever; also for *full*, as in truthful, careful. N hook stand for *been*, as in had been, have been. You cannot spend too much time in writing the signs, so as to memorize them. Some, you observe, mean more than one word. Habit will make them familiar.

Practice on one at a time. Do not try to learn them all at once. Keep them in right position, above, on, through, or below the line. Write them all this week, all the time, everywhere, except on the furniture!

proper principle al practice upon subordinate subject
belong able believe- remember remember- ance number brother before
above been objection contribution subjec- tion objective
its it is itself till, tell, it will until at all truth true
truthful whatever doctor dear during divine- ity
differ- ent difference done had been each will which will much will
which- ever general-ly imagine d cause because equal-ly difficult-y
calculate care careful can question govern-ed gave begin
begun again began feel follow follow full-y free offer from
often Phonography

Without intending, just now, to practice you on sentences, until our list of word-signs are completed (which will be done in one or two more lessons), we continue the list this time with the last of the full-length, circle and hook-signs, which you must write, read and re-write repeatedly, with the two lists in the two last lessons, *until you can write one of them as soon as you see the word or hear it*, mentally and manually, in your mind's eye, and on your paper.

The vowels, notwithstanding you discard them in these words, will still soon be faithful lieutenants in the battle against the mysteries. It has been customary in past publications on Phonography to give as word-signs many words that can be written only one way, and without abbreviation, and which would naturally be suggested to the student of themselves, as a matter of necessity. Strictly, we should consider as word-signs only those signs that involve a necessary change of position, or an abbreviation of the full form. But to give us plenty of material with which to build up Sentence Exercises, we give the whole lists as they are, which learn as above required. The word-signs without dotted lines are written on the line.

Write:
further farther several value over
very every even through these this those thus
themselves they will either there their they are other within
when than sure ly pleasure while we will well
here ours herself ourself ourselves we are where aware
rather myself himself Mr. remark we may more
men man impos-sible-ity matter influence when
one near nor manner opinion none known entire
another whether yours yourselves he

[To be continued.]

Talks with Boys about Foreign Lands.

THE NEW PRINCIPALITY OF BULGARIA AND ITS CAPITAL, TIRNOVA.

OUR young friends must change their geographies a little; as publishers will do before the schools open after the Summer vacation. The Turkish empire as it stood on the map and on the atlas a few years ago scarcely answers now.

The war between Turkey and Russia ended in a complete defeat of the Turks, who, after a brave fight, were beaten at Plevna. The other European Powers, afraid that Russia might become too strong, stepped in, and a treaty was made at Berlin.

By the terms of this treaty Bulgaria is to be a separate principality, and the people were to elect a prince. They have just chosen Prince Alexander Battenberg, who is a lieutenant in the Russian cavalry.

During the war he joined the staff of the Grand Duke Nicholas, and after remaining at the front until the Treaty of San Stefano was signed, he returned to Potsdam with his breast covered with Russian decorations. He is, moreover, a nephew of the Empress.

Bulgaria lies south of Roumania, which has already a prince of its own, and is no longer tributary to Turkey. The two principalities are separated by the Danube. Bulgaria extends to the Black Sea on the east and to the Balkan Mountains on the south, and contains about thirty-nine thousand square miles. The population is about two millions and a half, one million being Bulgarians.

These Bulgarians are Christians, and have at different times connected themselves with the Greek and Roman churches. They are a peaceable, industrious people, and are intelligent, so that with a good Government they must soon be a happy people. In the late war they suffered fearfully from the Turks and their irregular troops, and in retaliation the Bulgarians massacred many of the Turks.

It is a fine country for grain, wine, and cattle, and there are mines of gold and silver.

The country is well watered, having many rivers.

The chief cities are Sophia, Nissa, Tirnova, which seems to be fixed upon as a capital, Sistova and Nicopolis.

Tirnova is a quaintly and romantically situated old town, filled with relics of the old Bulgarian Empire, which a long era of Turkish rule has failed to efface, as may be seen by our illustration, where are portrayed the ruins of the ancient cathedral and the palace of Bulgarian sovereigns.

The ruins of the old palace are plainly visible, the walls, bastion, and gateway depicted on the hill being part of the old palace walls, guarding a steep and almost unscalable rock. On the summit of the isolated rock was situated the citadel, and there the Bulgarian kings were crowned. The mosque on the left was an old Christian church, now used as a Russian powder-magazine, but which will be restored and reconsecrated in a short time.

The causeway, three feet wide, leading from the citadel to the town, exists in very good preservation, while on the extreme right lies the town itself, built on the shores of the Jantra. The Turkish quarter now is almost completely wrecked. The whole appearance of Tirnova and its surroundings is eminently picturesque, as the town clings in seven distinct divisions to the steep declivities and overhanging precipices caused by the sharply tortuous windings of the river Jantra in its passage through the most notherly chain of the Balkan hills.

The history of the Bulgarians dates back to the time of the Roman Empire. They became Christians in 860 under their King, Bogoris, but they remained independent only about two centuries after that.

SIX SPLENDID STORIES!

Long Jim, the Scout;
Or,
The Death Valley of the Apaches.
By HENRY B. BRISBANE.
Begins in our next.

The Slave of the Mine;
Or,
Jack Harkaway in 'Frisco,
By BRACEBRIDGE HEMYNG.
Begins in No. 663.

Minnie's Rescue from the Wilds of Siberia,
Or,
The Daring Adventures of Two Brave Boys,
By ROGER STARBUCK.

Orville and Dan;
Or,
Adventures in Japan.
By COMMODORE AH-LOOK.

Roy the Ranger:
A Story of the Mexican War.

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THE ROUND TABLE.

PRIZES.

To be Read by all who Send Answers.

FOR A COMPLETE SET OF ANSWERS TO ALL THE ENIGMAS, ETC., IN THIS NUMBER.

For the best and earliest, due allowance being made for the distance of each competitor - $5.00
For the next best - - - - - - - - 2.50
For the third in merit and promptness - - 1.00

N. B.—There is no prize offered for an answer to only one puzzle or riddle. The answers must be to ALL. Competitors in all parts of the country have an equal chance.

ANSWERS TO RIDDLES, ETC., IN No. 655.

1. Saw. 2. Agnes, Gaunt, Nurse, Eosue, Steer. 3. Pearl, Earl, Ear, Fear, Fea. 4. Sirf-ace. 5. Dagaza, Grazide. 6. Go-diva. 7. S, Sun, Remit, Sumach-l, Niche, The, I. S. Rich, Alms, Poor—RAP, IgLoO, CarMelO, HooSieR. 8. C, L, are. 10. Mend-a-city.

WINNERS OF PRIZES IN No. 655.

1.—Frank Howe, Louisville, Ky.
2.—James P. Lafferty, 1008 Ward Street, Philadelphia, Pa.
3.—Alexander Williams, 205 Townsend Street, Baltimore, Md.

ENIGMAS, CHARADES, ETC.

1.—LOGOGRIPH.

Of letters five, a useful thing am I,
But cut off my head when thieves are nigh.
Change head for a freighted vessel's berth,
Once more for the hardest thing on earth.
Add two letters for a flight of birds,
Put one in place of first and tell the words.

2.—LOGOGRIPH.

A multitude my whole will be;
Cut off my head, and then you'll see
How my father likes his toddy—
So ought any other body.

Don't give it up, but try once more
The operation is not sore,
And then you'll see it is no whim,
But a nice, solid, useful limb.

Transpose what's left and you will find
An animal of the sheep kind.
You'll find the answer if you try;
So now, my friends, I'll say good-by.

3.—TRIPLE ACROSTICS.

My finals to you belong, beyond a doubt;
Needful, indeed, these puzzles to find out;
My primals and my centrals parts of my finals are
Designed by nature to protect with care.

1. To slander this will surely be;
2. A fish this is, as you will see;
3. To darken or obscure this shows to you;
4. When dies the flower, it does this too.

4.—CHARADE.

My first is an animal famed for its ears,
May your health never next till the end of your years
You've outran.
My third is an insect of scripture renown;
My whole, should you meet with, at once knock him down,
If you can.

5.—ENIGMA.

I am a word of letters three,
As small a noun as you will see;
And yet I count within my store
A thousand well-learned men or more

In music I have always been;
And close to kitchen fires I'm seen;
I'm found in taverns, and at night
I keep your window-shutters tight.

How various, then, my tasks must be!
So many things depend on me.
Now, rhyming bards, the answer seek;
I'll say adieu until next week.

6.—DELETION.

Add but a letter to a book men prize
And make it worthless to your wondering eyes.

7.—SQUARE WORDS.

A musical instrument; a novelist; cheerful and a conjunction; to fit; homes.

8.—METAGRAM.

My first implies a prickly plant, and also means to sting;
My second, though both deaf and dumb, is often said to sing;
My third is courage; and in fourth you'll find a bench or seat;
So change the head of the prickly plant, and the process twice repeat;
Change head once more and you're a seat
Still found in farmhouse plain and neat.

9.—SQUARE WORDS.

Severe; a ring; to lay before; a contemptuous manner; a boy's nickname.

10.—CHARADE.

Not rich enough to keep a coach
Or carriage and a pair;
I often drive upon my first,
To take the country air.
I have my second now in hand
To make this matter plain;
To find my third just persevere,
And do my bird again.
My whole's a useful trade, men say,
To learn you must work, not play.

FUN FOR THE BOYS.

CURIOUS OLD COIN.

What is the most difficult of all guns to keep clean? Why, a *fowling*-piece, of course. Ah-ha!

What is the difference between the top of the monument and a song for one voice? One is so high, the other's solo. See?

Why is the kippered herring you have for your breakfast like a celebrated poet of the seventeenth century? Because it is a dried 'un. Dryden—don't you understand?

What is the difference between a Welsh *air* and a Welsh rabbit? Your C. O. C. is not prepared to answer straight right off.

When can a man be said to have a ghost of a chance of satisfying his greediness? Why, when he is a *gobbler* up anything, of course.

Why are chimney-sweeps always contented with their trade? Because, don't you see, it *soots* them.

What prevents the river Thames from running away? Why, it's tide up, stupid!

What disease do all misers die of? Why, money-mania, of course.

BOOKSELLER—"What sort of books do you want, sir?" *Boggs*—"Oh, such books as a gentleman generally has!" *Bookseller*—"And how many?" *Boggs*—"Well, my library is twelve by fifteen, and I want it full." *Bookseller*—"Will you have them bound in Russia or Morocco?" *Boggs*—"Oh, don't send so far! Have them bound in New York."

"A KISS," said young Charles, "is a noun, we know:
But tell me, my dear is it proper or common?"
Love-y Mary blushed deep and exclaimed, "Why, I vow,
I think that a kiss is both proper and common."

THE SCHOOLBOY'S LAMENT.

Teach, teach, teach,
On every day of the week,
And thrash, thrash, thrash,
From your head down to your feet.
Reading and spelling and writing,
Grammar and geography,
Till a poor boy's brains
Are full of pains,
And he's tired as tired can be.

Write, write, write,
The moment you're out of line,
And write, write, write,
Until it is half-past nine;
Scratch and scribble and scrawl,
And blot and blur and smear,
Till the teacher comes
And warms your thumbs,
And makes you feel ever so queer.

Work, work, work,
Your examples until eleven,
And work, work, work,
Your examples at home till seven—
Pounds and ounces and drachms,
Drachms and ounces and pounds,
Till you get as mad,
You are always glad
When the bell for recess sounds.

It is, oh! for a happy land
Where never a teacher lives;
Where tops, marbles, and kites grow wild,
And a fellow can holloa and shout,
And there's never a book,
But a cosy nook
For to fish and to swim about.

And it's oh! for the happy time
When I get to be a man
And I can whistle and jump,
And beat on an old tin pan;
When I can put crooked pins
Down on the next boy's seat;
And I can put ink on his face
With never a fear to be beat;
Jump and whistle and prance,
And holloa and yell and shout,
And never a one
To spoil the fun,
Nor to keep me from going out.

"HAVE you, in your album, any original poetry?" asked one young lady of another. "No," was the reply; "but some of my friends have favored me with original spelling."

A BOON FOR SCHOOLBOYS.—A Scotch paper advertises boys' jackets as defying anything to beat them.

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FATAL FALL FROM A BALLOON.

IN and about the public square of Ionia, Michigan, on the 4th of July, 1873, at least ten thousand people had assembled to witness La Mountain's promised ascent in his balloon, or "Mammoth Airship." The balloon—not one of the ordinary silken sort, but of that foolhardy pattern which, originating with Mongolfier, should have ceased with him—was a paper globe, the levatory power of which was simply heated air. For some time the boisterous wind delayed the ascent, but half an hour before starting the balloon swelled bigger and bigger, and tugged at the ropes which held it to the earth.

There were eight of these, badly arranged, and there was no network over the canvas bulge. The professor was here, there, everywhere, attending to and guiding all details of the management, while all the people were looking at him with wonder and admiration. At half-past three in the afternoon he stepped into the car, leaning over to shake hands with some of the people who were near by.

Again he examined all the apparatus within his reach, and five minutes later gave word to let go the fastenings, and the balloon shot up bravely. The spectators shouted, and waved handkerchiefs and caps, and the professor answered the salute, waving his hat in return. Suddenly, however, had the swelling paper globe ascended to the distance of a hundred feet from the position which it first held when the spectators saw by its action and the agitation of the aeronaut that something serious was the matter. It did not rise symmetrically, but bunglingly, and there seemed to be some breakage in the substance of which the bag was composed.

Yet still it rose, and the people at some distance could see that the professor was greatly agitated, rushing about in his car, tugging at the ropes, which he was evidently trying to arrange.

The mouth of the canvas flapped violently. It was a moment of the most intense anxiety, and the crowd stood breathless, while the balloon went higher and higher, until it attained an altitude of at least half a mile, when it paused for an instant, there was a struggle, and the body slipped from between the ropes that bound it to the car, which instantly began to fall, while the balloon, loosened from its burden, bounded up higher.

The car upset, and the professor fell, at first head foremost, and then turning, with legs and arms outstretched, wheeling like lightning toward the earth. Then his body assumed a position directly the reverse of its previous, and he struck the ground feet first. His struggles in the air when the car began to fall were fearful to see. He endeavored to clamber into the basket, and, seeing that this was futile, tried to use the car as a parachute by turning it upside down. But he finally let go, and, as has been said, struck the ground with his feet, and was mashed to a pulp of gory flesh. Blood spurted from his mouth and ears, and in falling he made a hole in the earth five or six inches deep. The dreadful accident put a stop to the celebration of the day. The corpse was placed in the square, where it was viewed by thousands, and was sent, July 5th, 1873, to his home in Brooklyn, Michigan.

FATAL FALL OF AN AERONAUT AT IONIA, MICHIGAN.

AN INTELLIGENT HORSE.

ONE day my brother was out driving in the country, when a stranger stopped him by exclaiming:

"Hallo! that used to be my horse!"

"Guess not," replied my brother; "I bought her at a livery stable, and they told me she came from Boston."

"H'm! what do you call her?" the man asked.

My brother answered that she was sold to him under the name of "Pink."

Said the stranger:

"Ho! That isn't her name." Then suddenly he cried out sharply, "Nelly!"

Quick as flash the mare pricked up her ears and looked around. Stepping in front of her, the man said:

"Nelly, shake hands."

Up came the mare's right hoof for him to take. "Now give us the other hand, Nelly," and she raised the left forefoot. Then said the smiling man: "There! d'ye suppose that wan't my horse?"

HEROES.—It were well if there were fewer heroes, for I scarcely ever heard of any but did more mischief than good. These overgrown mortals commonly use their will with their right hand, and their reason with their left. The pride in their title and their power puts them in possession. Their pomp is furnished from rapine, and their scarlet is dyed with human blood. If wrecks and ruins and desolation of kingdoms are marks of greatness, why not worship a tempest, and erect a statue to the plague?